CHICAGO LEDGER

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Balancing Up the Ledger.

WE ARE not quite sure whether the Fair Ladye on the cover is a slack rope walker and treading those tangled lantern strings with that one daintye toe, or (to become more fanciful) if she is the incarnation of some twilight star caught there in the black velvet sky for just a tiny instant while Ledger readers see how beautiful starlight can be. It is quite possible, however, that she is in the act of unmasking at a carnival, and her brother, who has been flirting with her all evening is saying, "Good Heaven! So it's only Flossie."

There are people who are always making mistakes like that. Some folks never meet a new acquaintance without plunging into caustic comments on the hideousness of Miss B.'s hat only to discover that Miss B. is the New Acquaintance's sister. There was the Coquettish Girl, you know, who remarked to a late arrival:

"I don't know what's the matter with that little man over there. He was so attentive a few moments ago, and now he won't even look at me!"

Whereupon the late arrival remarked, casually:

"Perhaps he saw me come in. He's my husband."

YOU'VE also heard the one (meaning that we hope you haven't, but we're afraid you read it on our own joke page) —the one about Lilyan and Janyce who met on the street and when Lilyan began, "Dear, I want to ask if you'll be my bridesmaid——"

Janyce said, "Yes, but don't let's stop here to talk, for that silly Robert Graham is lumbering toward us, grinning like an idiot, and I don't want to be seen talking to him."

Lilyan's tone was not so honeyed as she replied: "He's my fiance."

IT MUST be fun to assume the identity of somebody else. But perhaps when as much depends upon it as hung upon Doctor Hallam's venture the fun would become grim danger. Doctor Hallam? Oh, he is the debonair chap with personality and a beard who steps as tall as life from the pages of Peter Cotton's new serial, "Thin Ice." Hallam skated so far that the ice was creaking and cracking at every turn; you will not dare to miss a single installment of this fascinating story for the ice grows thinner and thinner and you are going to wonder mighty hard whether or not he falls in.

AND if you have been following the humor series you admit that "The Ghost Who Came Back" (on Page 5) is one of the funniest if not the very funniest of all. We mentioned before that Howard Dwight Smiley is in London taking a vacation and it was from there that he sent us this rattling yarn about the man who committed suicide once too often. In the letter that accompanied the manuscript he became a bit chatty—authors often do. An incident he told seemed to indicate that rents there as high as here. It was about Billy an iron molder who was on strike and could not pay his rent. So, on the rent day, Billy went out of the way of the landlord and left Mrs. Billy to face the music. Returning home that night, he said to his wife:

"Well, Polly, how did tha' goo on wit' th' landlord?"

"Oh, Billy," she cried, in ecstacies, "whaat does tha' think? Th' landlord's giv' us th' hoose for our very own."

"Whaat!" roared Billy, "and did ye accept it?"

"Suttenly," said Polly.

"Well, tha' fool!" cried Billy. "We's ha' to pay th' rent noo."

IF VICTOR ROUSSEAU wouldn't mind us becoming flippant about so serious a situation as he portrays in this installment of the "Valley of Sleeping Slaves," we might tell you of what that picture (on page 7) reminds us. Oh well, here goes: there was an American traveler being entertained at a Chinese banquet once and the chair on which he sat was so slippery that the poor chap skidded clear down under the table. He was terribly embarrassed and seeing his confusion when he emerged, the Chinese, who are, above all things, polite, one by one slid from their chairs and disappeared under the table to make him feel that it was the fashion.

At dinners in Japan (formal dinners, by the way), the guests are presented with any meat they have failed to eat. However great or small the portion they have left, it is carefully wrapped up and the host is offended if they do not take it home. If they give dinners there preceding theater parties it seems a rather awkward custom. "Check your meat, sir, till after the show?" Nevertheless the idea must annoy old man H. C. L.

All the world does not love a crook, but all the world likes to read about other people getting crooked. So we are warning you not to miss "Jones Keeps Faith With the Mole," on page 12, just beneath the art head where a girl with a saucy pug nose is reaching across the title for some pearls that must be worth at least a million from the extravagant box the artist gave them. You'll enjoy it.

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The Editor Gets Another Interview!

PROBABLY the most solemn man the Editor of the Ledger has ever had the opportunity of knowing, is Professor Rudolph Adolph Titmacher. Professor Titmacher has never been known to smile. He has almost as much ability to see the point of a joke as tho he were born in England, instead of Berlin. He is a lean cadaverous man, with long black hair that falls in flowing locks to his old-fashioned batwing collar, and his deep set watery blue eyes are framed in enormous hornshell goggles, suspended on the end of a long, lean, searching analytical nose by a black silk cord. It was said that the professor once noting that his eye-glass cord was becoming worn, purchased, while passing thru Marshall Field's great store in Chicago, a new one from a nearby counter. It proved to be a cord used by ladies of marked embonpoint to constrain the two portions of a certain rigid encasement encompassing superfluous abdominal flesh. The professor was the object of smiles galore in his classes next day. Whether this ancedote about him be true or not, the Editor does not know.

Professor Titmacher's intellectual attainments are not few. He holds the world's championship for the time necessary to make a move on the chess board, having studied thru Boucicoult's Theorem, and having even antedated Einstein's Theory of Relativity over a period of three years, in order to make his twentieth move in his famous game with Professor Schweinmauer. When he had finally calculated his move, and wended his way to Professor Schweinmauer's, that latter gentleman had been dead for something over a year and a half. Professor Titmacher was quite aghast at this catastrophe, as he had worked out his equations solely upon Professor Schweinmauer's psychology, and Professor Schweinmauer, having willed the game to his assistant, Herr Assistant Professor Dinkelbaum, made it necessary for Professor Titmacher to go over his entire calculations and substitute the values (x plus i) for the previous values of (v). This required another four months, and in the meantime Professor Dinkelbaum died.

Thus it was that after seeing "The Lady in the Pink Nightie" at a leading Chicago theater last week, the Editor, feeling the need of a less frivolous outlook upon life, called upon Professor Titmacher at his rooms. Professor Titmacher was ensconsed in a huge leather chair, smoking a great calabash pipe. An embroidered smoking jacket, inside out, draped his torso. He was peering at a gaudily covered book thru his hornshell glasses, and his study table was covered with copious notes.

Greetings were soon over, and the Editor casually inquired of the Professor what literary work he was reading.

"I am studying," said Professor Titmacher ponderously, with pronounced German accent, "a book of poems, which, by the publisher's dateline, I see has been only recently released. For some unaccountable reason, it has been issued anonymously."

"What is the title?" inquired the Editor.

The professor squinted at the title of the gaudy book. The title is a mistaken one. Members of the fowl family are never addressed by the name of 'mother.'"

The Editor looked curious.

"Mother Goose," announced Professor Titmacher.

The Editor breathed a sigh. The mystery was solved.

"I find here the following poem," said the Professor didactically. He read off in a sonorous voice:

Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone,
But when she got there,
The cupboard was bare,
And so her poor dog got none.

He looked up. "The nutriment in bone is so slight that but few calories and carbohydrates could be obtained by this canine for the prolongation of its existence from an ingestion of the broken contents of said bone. Either Mrs. Hubbard had not read Professor Von Engdahl's treatise upon scientific feeding of dogs, cats and young infants, or else, as shown by the fact that she proceeded straight to the cupboard without having remembered the quite destitute condition of this receptacle, possessed a mind that was decidedly subnormal." He sighed. "The poem is markedly unscientific and unpsychological."

He turned over the leaves of the book and snorted derisively.

"I find here," he continued, "the following poem. Let me read it to you." He read, in rolling tones:

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,
The mouse ran up the clock,
The clock struck one,
And down he run,
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

He looked up. "I find upon a close examination of the encyclopedia that, while we have a wood known as hickory, and a weed known as burdock, or simply dock, that there is no tree or plant known as the dickory. In fact, the organic triology used by the writer is quite defective. The sequence of the ideas is even equally at fault, while one expects, naturally, some little nature poem, one steps at once into the animal kingdom among the rodents. Now I have made seven extensive experiments down in my cellar, using three different clocks, a Big Ben alarm clock, a grandfather's clock, and a Swiss cuckoo clock, each provided with a piece of cheese on the top. In neither case was the mouse I selected able to propel itself directly against the laws of gravity to the top of the timepiece, the coefficient of friction being too great in each and every case. The psychology of the mouse, however, is splendid, particularly in his abrupt departure after hearing the unexpected intonation of the clock striking the first hour after noonday. All in all, however, the poem is misleading."

He turned over the leaves of the book, warming up to his subject.

"Now we find the following:"

Simple Simon met a pieman,
Coming from the fair;
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
'Let us taste your ware.'

"Now," said Professor Titmacher, "we find again good psychology in this moron accosting the purveyor of pies and asking to be allowed to sample them in a gustatory sense. But facts, as we know them today, are at fault. Such a moron would have had the Binet-Simon tests for mentality applied to him, and would be under the specialized instruction such as Profesor Gartnerplatz is introducing in the State institutions, instead of wandering around to public gatherings, a menace and a nuisance. I doubt, too," he added, "whether the sale of pies has not reached such a stage in our present condition of civilization that the handling is done by more efficient methods than one man delivering and carrying these toothsome delicacies."

"I admire your close examination of this literary work," said the Editor weakly.

"I thank you," said the professor warmly, filling up his pipe. He turned again to the book. "Now will you listen to this:"

Little Miss Moffett sat on a tuffet,
Eating of curds and whey,
When along came a spider and sat
down beside her,
And frightened Miss Moffet away.

"Here we have some indications of a misguided parent rearing a child along the now discarded theories of Professor Metchnikoff, and his fermented milk bacillus. The author of this book was far behind in his knowledge of present views. I not only question the act of the spider sitting down beside her, on account of the shape of the abdomen of this crustacean, but I protest at Miss Moffet's unwarranted fears. The spider never bites except when attacked, and even the dread tarantula never, never causes death. Pooh! Miss Moffet is the result of absolutely defective training of young people."

"Did you come upon a poem about an—er—Humpty Dumpty?" queried the Editor.

"That did I," answered the professor wrathfully. "Here it is." He read:"

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,
All the king's horses and all the
king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty to-
gether again.

"The very idea of substituting equines for proper surgical treatment to this man who lost his equilibrium was atrocious," snapped the professor, "and the perpetrators should be punished to the fullest extent of the law. There is no doubt that the poem is a veiled narration of this horrible happening, written so that the public might know the facts which are being covered up. I shall institute legal proceedings tomorrow to compel the publishers to announce the name of this anonymous author, and him in turn to announce the true name of the victim, here set down as Humpty Dumpty, and if I have to lose three months on my new work, 'The Whyness of the Wherefore,' I shall secure for Humpty Dumpty's heirs pecuniary compensation. It is a damnable outrage."

The professor closed the book with a bang. He smoked in silence. His face was the picture of wrath. The editor rose quietly and taking his hat, bowed himself out into the night. He did not have the heart to enlighten Professor Titmacher. The professor's heart is in the right place, and it is to be hoped that the attorney whom the professor consults informs him that Humpty Dumpty is no more.

The Editor

Rimes of the Times.

BY I. I. SIR.

I met a stranger yesterday,
Who looked so sad and low,
I paused there at his side to say,
"What makes those great tears flow?"
The mourner brushed the drops away
And said, "If you must know:

"Life used to be a thing of joy,
My heart was gay and light,
No cares or worries could annoy,
The days were glad and bright;
But now I have renounced this life,
I seek a hermit hut,
There to forget the dear old knife—
FOR PIE IS FIFTEEN CENTS A CUT!"

His chin he sunk upon his chest,
And rolled his weeping eyes,
He gasped and writhed and sobbed the
rest
With interspersing sighs.
He told the tale at my behest
With incoherent cries:

"I used to frequent counters where
The lunch was made of food,
Butter was seldom, steak was rare,
And wheat cakes could be chewed;
The eggs were only one year old,
The rolls were well-bred, but
I saw a sign of portent cold—
ALL PIE IS FIFTEEN CENTS A CUT!

"I have renounced dessert," he frowned—
Ah, gustatory treat!
Farewell, ye crust, all crimped and
browned,
Farewell, ye filling, sweet,
Ah, pastry, pastry all around
But not a bite to eat!

"What care I, pray, for rich parfait,
For pudding, short-cake, muffins,
Blanc mange or mousse or charlotte
russe?
Those profiteering ruffians
Have robbed me of my love. Oh, when
The gates of Heaven shut
Behind me, may I see no sign—
ALL PIE IS FIFTEEN CENTS A CUT!"

Recognizes Herself.

THE agent for the Useless Dingus he was selling was a smart man. He rang the doorbell and a maid opened the door.

"Good morning," smiled the agent. "I am trying to find a married lady whose name I can't remember just now. I think this is her home. She is a woman easily described. Perhaps you know her. She is a handsome woman, with a perfect complexion, beautiful hair and teeth, lovely eyes and an ideal figure. I thought——"

"Mary!" called a voice from the top of the stairs, "tell the gentleman I will be right down!"

THIN ICE

by Peter Cotton

He Turned Facing the Man, and With His Back to the Fire He Stood Looking Intently, Curiously, Unflinchingly, Blue Eyes Into Blue Eyes, Silent and Searching.

THE psychological moment is something Dr. Hedric Hallam had read about but never really believed in until he stole the clothes from a dead man and prepared to rob him of his estate and his sweetheart. Then, in considering the orderly march of sequential events, he was inclined to believe he was controlled by an intermittent current of psychic direction.

The preceding month had been fraught with so many things which might be called crises he was at a loss to know into just which one of those events the distinctive moment entered. He had been compelled suddenly to leave a desultory clientele in the northern part of the State of Washington because of an inadvertence in marking drams instead of grams on a prescription, and he thought perhaps the psychological moment attacked him coincidental with the death which ensued. But he might have been mistaken—and the moment might have made its appearance only when he yielded to the line of least resistance and left the sheriff's posse after it got dark.

To follow the matter further—it might have begun while he was being cheated in a game of cards at Portland, or when he was put off the train at Eugene because some one had stolen his purse and ticket; or it might not have come into his life until the actual moment of his meeting with the "resemblance." Or again, it might have begun immediately upon the death of the "resemblance," projecting him thence into the dead man's life as the false continuation of a broken thread.

At any rate, the moment which first hurt the hardest was when he was put off the train at Eugene and left standing upon the platform of the Southern Pacific Railway ruefully to view the woolen mills and manufactories spread along the banks of the Williamette River. For a moment he was tempted to get upon a boat, go back to Portland, and make some one disgorge a few hundred dollars. The psychological moment might have begun just there, for a certain hotel would not have responded so readily to his summons for help when a greater disaster overtook him. It is to the credit of the psychological moment that he resisted. He did resist. And pending the arrival of some other thought he left the depot and went down into the city where he sold his only valuable possesion, a handsome gold watch, for $20—for he had to have some place to eat, sleep and think.

IT MAY be stated in passing that Dr. Hallam was 30 years of age, 5 feet 11, muscular and graceful, and that he had brown hair and blue eyes; also a beard. The latter was a concession to dignity as well as a shield for certain boyish expressions which continued to linger about his youthful face. The need of it having passed, and a greater need arising for its removal, he thought it about time to apply the shears and then the razor.

As he walked along the street with fingers absently squeezing the point of the beard he intended to do away with, his eyes encountered a sign, "Furnished Rooms." It appealed to his need for a retired existence much more than a hotel would have done, so ascending the stairs he rang the bell for the landlord. Later he came out upon the street after having rented the only vacant room in the house.

IT WAS immediately at the top of the stairs and quite easy to go in and out of—which was fortunate for him, as later events disclosed. The bed stood in one corner, a dresser in another, and in still another was a washstand. The center of the room was taken up by a small table. There was one rocking chair in it, one large easy chair, two common chairs, a scuttle full of coal, and a grate made ready for the match; for it was then the middle of February. Folding lattice blinds were upon the inside of the windows, covered by curtains of imitation lace, not as spotless as ermine, but sufficiently clean to lend an air of genteel respectability to the room when the fire was burning and the lights turned on.

At 9 o'clock he stood upon the curb in front of the house, debating whether or not he should look for a barbershop that night or wait until morning. He was about to go down the street when he chanced to see a man approaching from the opposite direction. When the stranger was abreast of him he stopped somewhat abruptly. Then to Dr. Hallam's surprise he stood and stared at him. The light from the building fell fairly upon the doctor's face, while the stranger with his back to it, was more or less in the shadows.

"Well, I'll be dinged!" he exclaimed.

Half stepping to one side Dr. Hallam saw the cause of his ejaculation. It was startling. He had met the "resemblance"—a man who appeared in the obscure light of the street. They stood in silence for a second and the stranger spoke again.

"Pard," he said, "I didn't know you was living. Shake. I'm glad to meet you."

Some waggish, ironical note in his voice struck the doctor humorously, and he put out his hand.

"We would make a team, wouldn't we?" he remarked.

"Now you're hootin'. I've heard of people being born that way, but to butt into a real, live grown up man what's your twin, somehow gits my goat. Live here?"

"No. Just stopping over night. Do you?"

"Not much. I hiked out eight miles to see a man I thought I knowd and all he had was the other feller's name. Do you drink?"

"Occasionally."

"Let's take something. I shore gotta see what you look like under the sparklers. My name's Hamilton—Henry Hamilton. Some of the boys call me H. H. What's yourn?"

Dr. Hallam laughed.

"Those are my initials also, and"—he lied—"they used to call me H. H., too."

"Now quit. You're gittin' some warm. But your name ain't Hamilton, is it?"

"No; it's Hallam—Dr. Hedric Hallam."

"Are you a doctor?"

"I am."

Hamilton put his hand upon his heart.

"Onct or twict I thought something was going to snap in here," he said. "Got to see a doctor myself pretty soon. But that ain't getting me a drink. Come on. I gotta drink with a man that looks like me."

Dr. Hallam hesitated. His curiosity was

aroused. He wanted to see the man at close quarters, but some monitor restrained him.

"I am afraid," he said after a moment, "that we would create too much interest in a saloon. I've a room upstairs and if you wish to go there we might take a peep and see how closely we do resemble each other."

"Nuff said, Doc. Nuff said. And that suits me to a dot. I'm gonna hit the midnight train and I'd just as soon rest up sittin' around in your room as loafing in a near-beer saloon."

"Good!" cried Dr. Hallam, and stepping in front of Hamilton he led the way up the stairs.

The hallway was deserted, there was not a sound to tell of life in any of the closed rooms. He inserted his key into the door, opened it, and they entered without any one having seen them. Dr. Hallam turned on the lights.

"Some style here, Doc," Hamilton commented.

"Sure is," replied Dr. Hallam with an amused laugh. "Wait till I light the fire."

"Then we'll rubber, hey? I say, Doc, dern if you ain't built like me!"

"I've already noticed it. And my voice sounds like yours too, doesn't it?"

He turned facing the man, and with his back to the fire he stood looking intently, curiously, unflinchingly, blue eyes into blue eyes, silent and searching.

The resemblance was complete. They were alike as two peas in a pod.

CHAPTER II.

FINDING HIMSELF.

"AND so you say," said Dr. Hallam as they sat with the little table between them, "that you are going home to claim your father's estate?"

"And the old man left a good sized wad, too, Doc. I kinder thought he'd cut me out, seeing as I been away for more than three years. But then there ain't nobody else for him to leave it to. Wish you was going along. Wouldn't we cut a figure? Come on. Open a office in Rock Springs."

Dr. Hallam leisurely flicked the ash from his cigar.

"I'm broke, Hamilton. Down and out, absolutely!"

Hamilton looked at him with a very intent gaze.

"You ain't joking?"

"No, that is straight."

"Then I'll stake you. What's mine is yours. I ain't been any too good, Doc. I been a hell rouster ever since—but no matter. I'm gonna turn over a new leaf. Some of us don't ask a man what he's been nor what made him what he is, and it ain't any of my business what broke you. I'll give you a lift if you want me to."

Dr. Hallam was tempted. He needed a friend and he needed a fresh start, but to take it at the hands of a man so nearly resembling him struck him as fatally foolish.

"I am sorry," he answered, "but there are reasons why I cannot accept your offer."

"All right. You know your business best. But drop me a line anyway. Say Doc, you didn't tell me how old you was."

"I am thirty."

"Same here. But hold on. Maybe we don't look so blame much alike after all. These here whiskers make a big difference. Now here's a picture I had taken just before I left home—the way I looked when I was there. Here it is. Do you look anything like that?"

Dr. Hallam took the photograph and studied it intently. If it had been handed to him as his own picture he would have been greatly deceived, the likeness was so complete. Even the square chin and the humorous, boyish smile which persistently hovered about his lips and was in reality one of the reasons for his whiskers, were there. But on the whole the face in the picture seemed in some indefinable way to lack the strength which was most characteristic of his face when clean shaven. He looked at Hamilton to see if he could discern the difference, and then back at the photograph. The lineaments were alike, yet there was a difference—the subtle, evasive difference of personality, the mysterious veil of the inner man lending lights and shadows, strength and weakness, all too intangible for description. As he silently sought to analyze the picture, Hamilton handed him another one.

Dr. Hallam took it with evident admiration. The face which looked up at him from the card was that of a girl apparently 16 or 17 years old, dark-eyed, black haired, with charm and witchery of expression entirely fascinating. It was clean cut and forceful. Something in the shape of the eyes and ears reminded him of a highbred animal quivering with life and intelligence.

"Who is she?" he asked.

Hamilton laughed constrainedly.

"That's Nance—Nance Maynard."

Dr. Hallam gave the picture back to him.

"She looks like a very interesting young person."

"She's interesting, sure nuff. If it hadn't been for her maybe I wouldn't been a hell rouster. But hold on now. She ain't to blame. Don't you go thinking that—only me and another feller. And this here other picture here is my dad and old Tim Lyons, his lawyer—the same man that wrote the letter you just read. But I gotta stop off at Pocatello——" he broke off suddenly and relapsed into his chair with an expression that was not agreeable.

DR. HALLAM glanced at him with surprise and veiled curiosity. The warm rich glow spreading out from the fire fell almost at their feet, and with only small power electric lights overhead, the picture they presented with the little table between them holding cigars, ash-tray and Hamilton's letter and photographs, was of lights and shadows distinctly contrasting.

"How Long Do You Expect to Keep the Room, Mr. Hamilton?"
"Two Days. Not Longer Than Three."

Hamilton suddenly put one hand to his heart with a gesture of pain, as he had done several times during the evening. He pulled a whisky flask from his pocket and offered it first to Hallam. The doctor refused, adding, "If your heart is hurting you, perhaps you had better not drink either."

"Oh, to hell! I ain't afraid of the heart. But it does seem like it's going to bust. Going like an engine. Take one? No. Well, here's to you old chap."

He drank the liquor and sat the glass back upon the table. Dr. Hallam noticed that he continued to hold his hand over his heart.

"I think, Hamilton, that you had better not drink any more tonight. I am telling you this as a physician. Whisky is bad for the heart."

Hamilton laughed good naturedly.

"Don't you be skeered, doc. I'm tougher'n tanbark. But say! It would be a joke if I'd keel over before I got a chance to spend the old man's scads. And there ain't nobody else for them to go to but the public. One of these days, Doc, I'm going to marry Nance and name the first kid after you. Dern it, this is getting to be a fright!"

He leaned over and pressed his hand tighter upon his heart, he remained for several seconds in the position of a man resisting pain by contraction. Then suddenly he stood up and Dr. Hallam noticed that his face had grown pale and drawn.

"Sit down, man," cried Hallam rising in alarm. "Let me see what's the matter with you."

A husky sigh escaped Hamilton's lips.

"I'll fix it," he said in a voice shattered by acute pain. Before Dr. Hallam could prevent him he seized the bottle and drank copiously from it.

"What did I tell you?" he cried. "That's the stuff! Feel it go thru me like chain lightning—straight from my head down thru my legs right into my feet. I'll be all right in a—my God, Doc!"

He tottered and fell to the floor with a crash.

Dr. Hallam sprang to his side. He tore open Hamilton's shirt and put his ear upon the bared chest. He held it there for many seconds and then arose pale and trembling.

The man was dead.

Appalled by the tragedy, by the sudden sense of desolation which came over him, he stood rigidly erect and stared at the dead face with fascinated horror. He shivered and moved away from it. As tho obeying some mysterious instinct of his being he rushed to the door and locked it and stood with his back against it, cowering and afraid — afraid of the thought which had come suddenly to him; afraid of the public; afraid of connection with tragedy coming on the heels of his flight from another death imputed to him. He was afraid that he would be accused of killing the stranger. Footsteps in the hallway set him atremble. When the last sound of them died away he slowly went back and knelt by the dead man again. And again he put his ear upon his heart and listened. There was no longer a doubt of it. Hamilton was dead.

He pulled himself together and again viewed the body, the question uppermost in his mind being what to do with it. It was his duty to summon the landlord. But on the other hand there arose the claim of a stronger duty—the call for self protection. The instinct of preservation is the strongest of human kind. To his way of thinking, to summon the landlord would be to invite self destruction. He would be detained by

(Continued on Page 15.)

THE GHOST THAT CAME BACK

BY HOWARD DWIGHT SMILEY

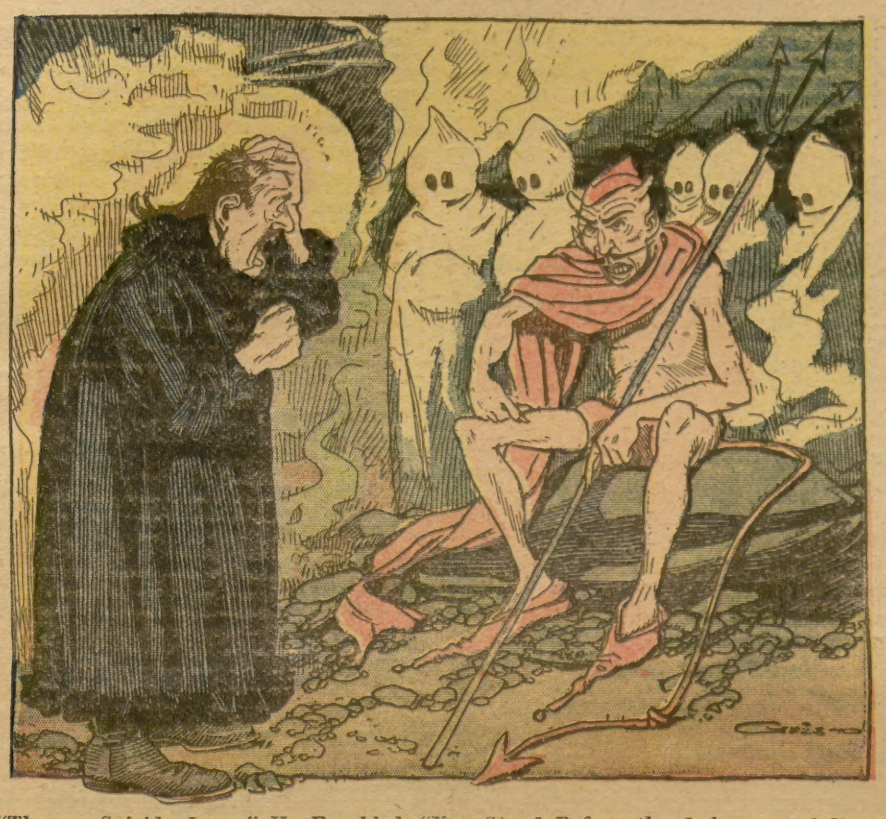
"SHE won't do it, 'Suicide,'" said the boss as he pulled up alongside the chuck wagon, where the cook was anxiously awaiting him.

He dismounted and stood with one hand on the pommel of the saddle while he faced the other and continued in a mournful tone.

"I done eat four orders of ham and aigs just to prolong the argument with Sadie, but she's as obdurate as a she-mule in a Choctaw blizzard. Couldn't move her nohow."

The boss began unsaddling his pony, and Suicide Jones turned sadly away, walked to the wagon and drew out his war-bag, and then retired to the seclusion of a bunch of mesquite bushes about 10 yards from the camp.

Two cowpunchers, squatted by the



"Thomas Suicide Jones," He Rumbled, "You Stand Before the Judgment of Your Deserts."

camp fire, watched him go with expressions of bored resignation.

"Done gone to make his will again," commented Highwater Jenkins dryly. "Going to hang himself again tonight."

"He sure is," agreed the boss, who had approached the fire after turning out his horse. "He'll do it in dead earnest, this time, too."

The others looked up in surprise as the boss sat down and reached for a coal to light his cigarette.

"You going to let him do it?" asked Rawhide Billings.

"He'll sure wake up in Hades, this time," chuckled the boss.

The others looked incredulous.

"You going to let us lose a good cook?" asked Highwater.

"Going to save one," answered the boss, still chuckling.

Highwater snorted indignantly. "What for you talking thataway, Billy?" he demanded. "Cain't you explain yourself? You ain't going to let Suicide go to work and kill himself deliberate, without no interfering, are you?"

"No, not exactly," admitted the boss. "Just mighty nigh. So close he'll think he's sure connected up with the real thing."

Suicide Jones came out of the clump of mesquite and called across the open.

"Say, you, Highwater, what size boots you wear?" he wanted to know.

"Nines and a half," shouted Highwater promptly. "How many times have I got to tell you, Suicide, that your boots is too small. I won't wear no dead man's boots anyhow."

Suicide retired into the mesquite again.

"Wills me his boots every time he hangs himself," grumbled Highwater. "What you aiming to do this time, Billy?" he asked the boss.

"I met up with a fellow in Abilene last night who's plumb interesting," began the boss in a low tone. "He's waiting table at the 'Last Chance,' along with Sadie, the biscuit shooter Suicide's stuck on. Heard me argying with her to come along out here and get married and keep our cook in the family, and after supper he looked me up on the hotel veranda and we got to talking.

"Seems he's an actor man. Owns a show troop that has gone broke in Abilene. He's waiting table to pay off his hotel bill and raise enough dust to carry himself and troop of six more to Phoenix. Rest of the troop are chamber-maiding or hoss-wrangling to keep down expenses, but it looked like they was stuck there indefinitely.

"After I'd explained to him how Suicide was eating his heart out over Sadie and hanging himself on an average of every other day, 'count of being rejected so numerous, and being cut down by one or the other of us just in time to save his fool life, this fellow got real interested, and it ain't no time at all before he hits on a scheme that's plumb comical and effective. I'm paying him a hundred dollars to put it thru."

"Ain't that a lot of money to waste on that old maverick?" asked Highwater.

"Suicide pays for it," chuckled the boss. "He's got three months back pay coming, which he won't need after he's dead; amounts to a hundred and twenty dollars; so you see I'm making good money, not counting funeral expenses."

"WISH you'd tell me what you're driving at," growled Highwater. "It seems that the show this troop plays is called 'Faust,' and this fellow plays the part of Mephist—something or other—I don't know how they say it, anyhow it's short for the devil. Looks it, too. Took me up to his room and put on his war paint and he was sure a dead ringer for Old Nick himself. I got him cached down in Dead-Hoss Canyon now, along with another member of the troop and a wagon load of stage scenery."

"You have!" exclaimed Highwater. "What for?"

"Going to cure Suicide," answered the boss. "We got it all figured out. You know where Moaning Cave is, down there in the canyon? Well, we're going to pull the stunt off in there. Suicide ain't never seen it. It'll sure be plumb funny."

"Here he comes," warned Rawhide, as the cook emerged from the mesquite, warbag in hand, and approached the group around the fire.

"Now you fellows keep still," admonished the boss. "There's ain't nothing to do now except wait until he hangs himself."

Suicide stowed his warbag in the wagon and then went gloomily about preparing a belated supper. While he was doing this, three more cowpunchers rode in, and Highwater and Rawhide went out to catch their ponies to go on night duty.

They ate their suppers hastily, for they were already late, and as they rose to go, the cook called them to one side, out of hearing of the others.

"Boys," he said brokenly, "I done got a hunch that I ain't going to see you no more, and I sort o' wanted to bid you good-by. You done been good friends to me and I ain't forgot you in my will."

He extended his hand and the cowpunchers shook it gravely, and then he turned and walked tearfully out onto the prairie, while the others went to their ponies, where the boss was awaiting them.

"Reckon them critters 'll have to herd themselves tonight for a spell," he whispered. "You fellows listen and when you hear me shoot, you come rollicking in. I'm going to need you in pulling off this stunt."

They rode away and the boss returned to the fire and sat down with the day herders who were smoking moodily before the blaze.

Suicide washed the supper dishes and put things in order and then came over to the fire and silently shook hands with all present. He had evidently intended saying something, but choked on his words and gave it up. Gathering his warbag and blankets from the wagon he moved some distance from the others and rolled up, ostensibly to go to sleep.

Plug Miller drew out his knife and cut a notch in the left leg of his leather chaps, and counted.

"Seventeen," he informed the others. "Seventeen times that chinook has gone and committed suicide and been rescued, all on account of a dog-gone, red-headed biscuit-shooter, who won't have him. He ain't worth all this bothering with, Billy."

"Darn good cook," argued the boss. "Don't know where we're going to get another if he passes in his checks. Now you fellows roll up and keep still and give him plenty of rope. I got a hunch that this is his last hanging."

An hour later Suicide cautiously raised his head and peered about. The fire had died down to a few glowing embers, but it was bright starlight and objects were fairly discernible. He could see the huddled forms of his companions, apparently fast asleep.

Silently he threw off his blankets, sat up, and reached for his warbag. First, he drew forth a folded paper which he pinned to one of his blankets. Then he took out a horse-hair riata, rose to his feet, tip-toed to the wagon where he picked up an empty soap box, and then stole off into the night.

About one hundred yards away stood a lone cottonwood tree. Suicide placed the soap box under this, mounted it, and deftly made a hangman's noose in one end of the riata. This he adjusted about his neck, securely tied the other end of the rope to the limb overhead, and then, everything in readiness, he gave one farewell look at the surrounding scenery and swung loose, kicking the box from under him.

Around the end of the chuck wagon filed the boss and the three day herders. They hurried to the cottonwood tree and Plug Miller drew out his knife and was about to cut the riata when the boss stopped him.

"Wait till he stops dancing," he whispered. "Got to bust him wide open this time."

Suicide was kicking feebly and rapidly strangling to death. The boss waited until all movement had stopped, then mounted the soap box and untied the rope about the limb and gently lowered the cook's body to the ground.

"Now a couple of you fellows catch Molly and hitch her to the buckboard, pronto," he instructed.

Two of the cowpunchers hurried away, leaving Plug with the boss. The latter shot his six-shooter into the air to summon Highwater and Rawhide, and then drew a bottle from his pocket and squatted over the form of Suicide.

Plug loosened the noose, and the cook was gasping feebly and showing no signs of returning consciousness. The boss poured some of the contents from the

He Turned and Walked Tearfully Out on to the Prairie.

bottle onto his handkerchief and applied it to the cook's nose.

"Chloroform," he told the inquiring Plug. "Got to keep him dead for a spell."

Highwater and Rawhide arrived about the same time as the buckboard, and as soon as he had them all together the boss hurriedly explained his plans to the huge delight of everybody.

They loaded the slumbering cook into the buckboard, and the boss drove off with him towards Dead Hoss Canyon, while the others followed on their ponies.

SUICIDE Jones awoke in Stygian darkness. He was shivering with cold, his head ached, and he felt nauseated. As a vent for his feelings he emitted a loud, dismal groan.

The result startled him into instant wakefulness. That groan echoed and reverberated in a manner that was truly terrifying. Suicide sat up with a gasp.

"Where in the hotel am I at?" he asked himself.

A peal of demoniacal laughter answered the query and fetched a yell of terror from the unfortunate cook.

Then the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, and the merry demons howled!

Suicide sat transfixed, his hands clutching the air, his hair on end, and his eyes popping from his head.

From somewhere in the distance a red light flared up and diffused thru a chamber that Suicide felt certain was not of this world. He looked about in terror;

"I Ain't Nothin' but Doggoned Ghost," He Sobbed Aloud, "Just an Orn'ry No 'Count Ghost!"

he seemed to be in a huge cavernous room, thru which countless bats were flitting. Huge stalactites hanging from the ceiling and smaller stalagmites rising from the floor all about him, glistened with millions of jewels in the fitful light.

He grasped the situation instantly! He had died and had arrived at the infernal regions!

Before him, seated on a stone throne, was His Satanic Majesty himself, tail, horns, pitchfork and all, complete, and about him was a circle of six white-sheeted figures, who stood grimly on guard.

Suicide struggled to his feet and found himself to be gowned in a long, flowing, black mother hubbard, that smelled decidedly like calico.

Satan raised his hand and instantly the thunder died away; then in a hollow voice he addressed the unhappy cook.

"Thomas Suicide Jones," he rumbled. "You stand before the judgment of your just deserts!"

"Yessir!" chattered Suicide, the chills jumping up and down his spine. "Yessir!"

Several of the white-shrouded figures snorted violently, but the cook was too terrified to notice.

Then Old Nick roared:

Sit down, sit down upon the slag,
and answer loud and high
The harm that ye did to the Sons of
Man or ever you came to die.

Suicide had never read Kipling and was therefore not acquainted with his predecessor to the infernal regions, namely, Mr. Tomlinson, late of Berkeley Square. However, he was no doubt experiencing much the same sensations as did that historic gentleman on his memorable visit to Hell-Mouth Gate.

Suicide sat down upon the slag promptly. The floor was rough and covered with sharp little projections, and the black mother hubbard was thin, but Suicide sat there, nevertheless.

"Yessir, yessir, your honor," he hastened to say. "I never done nothing to nobody, Sir. I allus been a good man, Sir! I didn't go to commit suicide, Sir! Relied on them fool day herders to cut me down like they allus has done! My friends done failed me, Sir, at the last minute and let me die! I—I done trusted 'em once too often, Sir, and they went back on me, but I didn't go to commit suicide, honest injun I didn't!"

The white-shrouded figures rocked and swayed, while sounds of strangulation came from under the sheets that covered them, but Suicide gave no heed. His entire attention was focused on the gentleman with the horns and tail.

Satan declaimed at great length. He dwelt long on the folly of any one invading the infernal regions ahead of time. There was no place prepared for him. Just because Satan was running this joint, wasn't any sign that he was going to stand for a lot of loose-moraled cahoots that went around hanging themselves on trees, being dumped in on him promiscuous. He wanted it understood that he was running a respectable place, contrary to general reports, and he wasn't going to have a lot of "sooners" loafing around just because they didn't know enough to stay where they belonged. There wasn't much choice except to heave Suicide into the eternal fires, there to remain until a job was left vacant that he could fill. That seemed to be about the only thing—unless he wanted to go back.

"GO BACK?" questioned Suicide hopefully.

"Certainly," answered His Majesty. "If you choose, you can return to the scene of your crime and take up your regular job and work out your allotted time—with certain restrictions, of course."

"You mean that I can go back to cooking for the Lazy B outfit?" asked the astonished Suicide.

"Well, not exactly. You'll only seem to do the work. It'll be real enough to you, cooking, dish washing, and all, and you'll be able to see your old friends about you, and hear them, and see them eat, but they won't be able to see or hear you. You'll be a ghost, don't you see? Ghosts have regular duties to perform, same as live folks, only with them it's purely imaginary."

"How am I going to cook for the outfit when they can't see or hear me?" asked Suicide.

"You won't. You'll only imagine you cook, but it'll be just as real as if you did cook. You won't even be able to see the men who do the real cooking. Everything will be perfectly natural. But you cannot shirk your duties. You must cook the meals regularly, which your friends will seem to eat, and you must wash the dishes afterwards and perform your other camp duties; you'll do it without pay, too."

"I see," said Suicide. "If I do that, I don't have to be heaved into—into that other place?"

"Exactly. Do you want to go back?"

"Right this minute!" answered Suicide eagerly. "Show me the way!"

"And you understand your duties perfectly?"

"Yessir!"

"You understand that if you fall down, back you come and into the pit you go?"

"Yessir!"

"Ho, Mephisto!" shouted Satan, and a little red devil came capering out from one of the subways of the cave, bearing in his hand a huge, old-fashioned goblet, which he presented to Suicide with a low bow.

"Drink that," commanded His Majesty, and without a murmur the cook drained the glass.

The little red devil capered back, and then the light went out, the thunder crashed, the lightning flashed, and the merry demons howled once more, while Suicide sat down suddenly, his head whirling.

Five minutes later he was sound asleep. He had swallowed a regulation dose of knockout drops.

Divested of their shrouds, the cowpunchers and the boss shook hands enthusiastically with the show men.

"That's sure the funniest stunt I ever seen pulled off," the boss declared.

They carried the sleeping cook out of the cave and placed him in the buckboard, then turned to and helped the show men load their thunder machine and other paraphernalia of the defunct Faust Company onto the wagon.

"Here's your hundred dollars," said the boss, handing the erstwhile Satan a roll of bills. "You've sure earned them. Now you just follow this trail and bear to the right and you'll hit Abilene before daylight. So long, and good luck to you."

IT WAS broad daylight when the cook awoke. He was lying under the cottonwood tree, still garbed in the black mother-hubbard, and decidedly chilled.

He got onto his feet slowly and looked about, while the events of the night before buzzed in his brain and struggled for order. From the limb above him dangled the horse-hair riata, with the hangman's noose in the end. Directly below it was a newly sodded grave.

"That's my grave," he told himself. "By cricky! I've done been there! There and back again! Gosh!"

He moved over toward the chuck wagon with his long black mother hubbard flopping ludicrously about his ankles. Highwater Jenkins and Rawhide Billings were seated by the fire, talking dejectedly. Suicide approached them hopefully.

"Morning, pards," he ventured timidly.

Neither seemed to hear, but gazed gloomily off across the prairie. Suicide moved around the fire until he was in direct line with Rawhide's vision. The cowpuncher seemed to look straight thru him.

Rawhide sighed windily. "It's sure lonesome without poor old Suicide around," he complained. "Breakfast didn't taste right this morning, did she, Hi?"

"I dunno," argued Highwater. "He wasn't what you'd call such a whale of a cook. Leastwise I didn't think so. Flapjacks always sour and coffee muddy. I understand he's got a wife and fourteen small children back East, which he deserted. He done tried to deceive that poor biscuit shooter in Abilene."

"You're a liar and a hoss thief and you eat pie with a knife!" shouted Suicide angrily. The others did not seem to hear.

"That ain't no way to talk about a dead comrade," reproached Rawhide. "Poor old Suicide is dead and in his grave. He had his good qualities, even if he did serve time for hoss stealing, up in Dakota."

"You long-legged, piebald jackrabbit!" yelled the cook. "I never rustled a hoss in my life, and you know it!"

"The only decent thing he ever done in his life was to will that biscuit shooter his hundred and twenty dollars back pay," continued Highwater, as if there had been no interruption.

"The boss ain't going to give it to her," said Rawhide. "Going to keep it to cover funeral expenses, and for Suicide's quitting without notice."

"Is that so!" exclaimed the irate cook. "If Bill Etts thinks he can come anything like that on me, he's got another guess coming! I'll sue him!"

If the others heard, they gave no sign, but continued discussing the unhappy cook in such disparaging terms that they soon had him fairly dancing with rage and grief. At last he turned away in despair.

"I ain't nothing but a dog-gone ghost!" he sobbed aloud. "Just an orn'ry no 'count ghost, what cain't be seen nor heard nor nothing, and bound out to cook vittles and wash dishes forever, for nothing, without even the comfort of committing suicide!"

Rawhide and Highwater found business elsewhere in a hurry, nor did they return until the boss and the rest of the outfit arrived about two hours later. In the meantime, Suicide, obedient to Satan's instructions, had washed up the breakfast dishes and was busily engaged in preparing dinner.

No one noticed his presence in the camp, and after the meal, which Rawhide and Highwater insisted that they had cooked, in spite of Suicide's voluble but apparently unheard protestations, the boss walked over to the newly sodded grave under the cottonwood tree and shed copious tears.

"Poor old Suicide," he said, as he returned to the fire. "He willed me his boots and best pants. He was a good old soul, even if he did marry a Piute squaw down in Lower California, which he afterwards deserted."

Whereat Suicide rushed out into the wilderness and wept.

For the next two weeks matters ran very smoothly with the Lazy B outfit. Suicide took up his duties where he had left off, previous to the hanging, and worked most industriously. After two days and nights of futile effort to make his erstwhile companions hear or see him, he gave up in despair and became moody and taciturn, remaining away by himself when off duty, to avoid hearing personal conversation of post-mortem nature.

This condition of affairs might have continued indefinitely had not the boss and Plug Miller quarreled. Plug received his walking papers and left the camp in high dudgeon, swearing dire vengeance.

ONE morning, two days after Plug's departure, Suicide, who was alone in camp, noted the approach of a horse and buckboard, from the direction of Abilene.

As the rig drew nearer the cook saw that the driver was a woman, and retired in much trepidation to the interior of the chuck wagon. Suicide was still garbed in the long, black, flowing mother hubbard.

The rig drove up and the driver stepped down. Thru the flaps of the chuck wagon Suicide discovered that she was the lady of his dreams, Sadie Denmark, the "Last Chance" biscuit shooter.

Sadie carried a large bunch of wild flowers in her hand, and after hallooing several times without receiving an answer, she walked over to the cottonwood and deposited her bouquet on the grave, drew out a handerchief and wept.

"Great Cats!" exclaimed Suicide, as he watched her thru a rent in the canvas covering of the chuck wagon. He was completely stupefied by this behavior of one whom he had deemed so cold and heartless.

After an interval Sadie returned to the wagon, but did not leave, as Suicide fervently prayed she would. He was nothing now but a shiftless ghost, and it would be useless to renew acquaintances. He had irrefutable proof of his invisibility to mortal eyes, but native modesty kept him from appearing before a lady in that black mother hubbard.

Sadie was evidently waiting for some one, for she walked about the camp, casting frequent glances out over the prairie, and muttering to herself impatiently. In his efforts to keep an eye on her, Suicide finally succeeded in upsetting a pile of canned goods, which fell to the floor of the wagon with a loud clatter.

At the sound, Sadie turned and gazed wonderingly at the wagon for a moment; then advanced, pulled back the flaps, and peered in, disclosing the dismayed cook huddled in a corner.

Sadie was undoubtedly astonished, but she did not lose her presence of mind.

"What on earth are you doing in there?" she demanded sharply.

Suicide remained silent.

"Can't you talk?" she asked.

"Are you speaking to me?" asked Suicide in an awed tone.

"Certainly I'm talking to you!"

"Can you see me?"

"Of course!"

"And hear me?"

"Yes!"

"Well, I'll be dog-goned!" exclaimed the amazed cook.

"Why shouldn't I hear you?" inquired Sadie.

"I'm dead," Suicide solemnly declared.

"Hump! That's what Plug Miller told me. Said you left me a hundred and twenty dollars in your will. That's what I'm after!"

"You'll have to see the boss," Suicide informed her. "I ain't, nothing but a no 'count ghost now, what don't have no money."

"You be? What are you hiding in this wagon for if you're dead? You'd ought to be in a hotter place than this."

"Been there," answered Suicide.

"I don't believe you're any more dead than I am! Come out of there!"

"I'd rather not," said Suicide modestly.

Sadie reached a sinewy arm thru the flaps and seized the ghost by his scalp lock and dragged him forth.

"There!" she exclaimed. "Told you, you wasn't dead! What're you trying to fool me this way for?"

"I ain't!" cried the astonished cook. "I believed I was dead, honest injun I did!"

"Plug said you committed suicide 'count of me."

"Did. Leastwise, thought I did. You sure I'm alive?"

"Course you are, you old fool! Didn't you know better than to go committing suicide without first consulting me?"

"Did."

"Didn't either! You sent Bill Etts down to ask me! Don't you know that no lady takes second-hand proposals if she's got any respect for herself? The idea!"

"Asked you twicet, myself."

"Well, what if you did? Don't you know it's a woman's privilege to refuse twice and accept on the third proposal? They always do!"

WHEN the boss and his men arrived in camp that night, hungry and tired, they found the place deserted. On the chuck wagon hung a long black mother-hubbard, to which was pinned a note addressed to the boss. He read it aloud to the others:

That was a dog-gone mean trick that you fellows played on me. If Sadie hadn't happened along and showed you up for what you are I might have been a ghost forever and never knowed the difference, you blame old coyotes, you. Me and Sadie have gone to Abilene to get married, and I'll thank you to send my back pay care the Last Chance Hotel. I won't work no more for no such dog-gone pie-biters as you are.

Yours truly,
THOMAS JONES.

P. S. We ain't figured out how you done it, but Sadie thinks that show troop what was stuck in Abilene had something to do with it. When I find Plug Miller I'm going to pound the facts out of him, and then I'm coming back here and settle with you fellows for what you said about me while I was dead.

T. J.

The Morning Song..

It's a brave, sweet world, for all its sighs—
Rain and Morning around the eyes;
Glad "Good Morning," and then "Good Night"—
And shadows of dreams are born of Light.
Sorrow is saying, the way along:
"Night—then the Morning song!"

Hopes and fears of the fleet-winged years;
The gift of Love and the gift of Tears;
And joy for the journey, thru cloud and sun,
And the Gates of Stars, with the journey done,
And Hope that sings where the loved stars throng:
"Night—then the Morning song!"

Spirit of Light, from the Hills of Dawn;
Maker of Morning, lead Life on!
Sighing—singing—the ways are trod,
But stars and storms are steps to God.
Hope, high as Heaven, and Faith, soul-strong—
Light—and the Morning Song!

—FRANK L. STANTON.

They Would Be, Too.

MR. SMITH-FARMAN acquired great wealth by the death of a relative, and his wife immediately became anxious to get into society. Her knowledge of social customs left much to be desired.

Their nearest neighbors were a very exclusive family, who were extremely conservative regarding their friends. Mrs. Smith-Farman, desiring the acquaintance of this family, sent a card as follows:

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith-Farman present their compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Hartt, and hope they are well. Mr. and Mrs. Smith-Farman will be at home on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock."

The family receiving it were quite equal to the occasion, however, and Mrs. Smith-Farman received the following reply:

"Mr and Mrs. Hartt return the compliments of Mr. and Mrs. Smith-Farman, and inform them that they are very well. Mr. and Mrs. Hartt are glad to know that Mr. and Mrs. Smith-Farman will be at home on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock. Mr. and Mrs. Hartt will also be at home."

CROOKED TRAILS AND STRAIGHT

BY WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE

The Story You Missed.

CURLY FLANDRAU had not intended to become a horse-thief. He was only a young, adventuresome boy who had become involved in questionable circumstances thru his companions,

LUTE BLACKWELL, ex-convict, and

BAD BILL CRANSTON. Neither had Curly meant to harm the sheriff,

LUCK CULLISON, the best liked man in the county. He was simply afraid of being captured by the posse the sheriff headed, and in his panic he shot wildly. About to be lynched by the cowboys, Curly was saved by

KATE CULLISON, the daughter of Sheriff Cullison, whom Flandrau had wounded. Later, her father questioned Flandrau as to the whereabouts of his son,

YOUNG SAM CULLISON, who was ruining his life just as Curly had thru evil companionship, especially that of

SOAPY STONE, a hardened criminal who hated the elder Cullison and was seeking revenge by corrupting his son.

The eccentric sheriff went the bond of this boy who had shot him, and to repay the kindness Curly resolved to rescue Sam from the downward road. In order to do this he rode over to Soapy's outfit, where he found Sam, Bad Bill, Soapy and Blackwell in an orgy of drinking and gambling.

On discovering that there was a plot afoot between Soapy and young Cullison, Curly accompanied the latter into Saguache to find out just what was up. He finally ferreted out the secret: Soapy and Blackwell intended to stage a train holdup with Sam Cullison as a confederate. To revenge themselves on Sheriff Cullison they meant to bring about Sam's death on the scene of the hold-up—it would be ostensibly accidental but they intended to take no chances on trusting the boy with their secrets. Curly thought it best to confide the plot to

LAURA LONDON, young Sam's sweetheart, also to the boy's father and sister. The same day Blackwell appeared in Saguache and boasted that he would shoot Curly on sight.

This story began in No. 22, the Ledger for May 29. Back copies may be obtained thru this office, from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER X.

"STICK TO YOUR SADDLE."

THE old Arizona fashion of settling a difference of opinion with the six-gun had long fallen into disuse, but Saguache was still close enough to the stark primeval emotions to wait with a keen interest for the crack of the revolver that would put a period to the quarrel between Soapy Stone and young Flandrau. It was known that Curly had refused to leave town, just as it was known that Stone and that other prison bird Blackwell were hanging about the Last Chance and Chalkeye's Place drinking together morosely. It was observed, too, that whenever Curly appeared in public he was attended by friends. Sometimes it would be Maloney and Davis, sometimes his uncle, Alec Flandrau, occasionally a couple of the Map of Texas vanqueros.

It chanced that "Old Man" Flandrau, drifting into Chalkeye's Place, found in the assembled group the man he sought. Billie Mackenzie, grizzled owner of the Fiddleback ranch, was with him, and it was in the preliminary pause before drinking that Alec made his official announcement.

"No, Mac, I ain't worrying about that any. Curly is going to get a square deal. We're all agreed on that. If there's any shooting from cover there'll be a lynching pronto. That goes."

Flandrau, Senior, did not glance at the sullen face of Lute Blackwell hovering in the background, but he knew perfectly well that inside of an hour word would reach Soapy Stone that only an even break with Curly would be allowed.

The day passed without a meeting between the two. Curly grew nervous at the delay.

"I'm as restless as a toad on a hot skillet," he confessed to Davis. "This thing of never knowing what minute Soapy will send me his leaden compliments ain't any picnic. Wisht it was over."

"He's drinking himself blind. Every hour is to the good for you."

Curly shrugged. "Drunk or sober Soapy always shoots straight."

Another day passed. The festivities had begun and Curly had to be much in evidence before the public. His friends had attempted to dissuade him from riding in the bucking broncho contest, but he had refused to let his name be scratched from the list of contestants.

A thousand pair of eyes in the grandstand watched the boy as he lounged against the corral fence laughing and talking with his friends. A dozen people were on the lookout for the approach of Stone. Fifty others had warned the young man to be careful. For Saguache was with him almost to a man.

Dick Maloney heard his voice called as he was passing the grandstand. A minute later he was in the Cullison box shaking hands with Kate.

"Is—is there anything new?" she asked in a low voice.

Her friend shook his head. "No. Soapy may drift out here any minute now."

"Will he——?" Her eyes finished the question.

He shook his head. "Don't know. That's the mischief of it. If they should meet just after Curly finishes riding the boy won't have a chance. His nerves won't be steady enough."

"Dad is doing something. I don't know what it is. He had a meeting with a lot of cattlemen about it—— I don't see how that boy can sit there on the fence laughing when any minute——"

"Curly's game as they make 'em. He's a prince, too. I like that boy better every day."

"He doesn't seem to me so—wild. But they say he's awfully reckless." She said it with a visible reluctance, as if she wanted him to deny the charge.

"Sho! Curly needs explaining some. That's all. Give a dog a bad name and hang him. That saying is as straight as the trail of a thirsty cow. The kid got off wrong foot first, and before he'd hardly took to shaving respectable folks were hunting the dictionary to find bad names to throw at him. He was a reprobate and no account. Citizens that differed on everything else was unanimous about that. Mothers kinder herded their young folks in a corral when he slung his smile their way."

"But why?" she persisted. "What had he done?"

"Gambled his wages, and drank some, and beat up Pete Schiff, and shot the lights out of the Legal Tender saloon. That's about all at first."

"Wasn't it enough?"

"Most folks thought so. So when Curly bumped into them keep-off-the-grass signs parents put up for him he had to prove they were justified. That's the way a kid acts. Half the bad men are only coltish cowpunchers gone wrong thru rotten whisky and luck breaking bad for them."

"Is Soapy that kind?" she asked, but not because she did not know the answer.

"He's the other kind, bad at the heart. But Curly was just a kid crazy with the heat when he made that fool play of rustling horses."

A lad made his way to them with a note. Kate read it and turned to Dick. Her eyes were shining happily.

"I've got news from Dad. It's all right. Soapy Stone has left town."

"Why?"

"A DOZEN of the big cattlemen signed a note and sent it to Stone. They told him that if he touched Curly he would never leave town alive. He was given word to get out of town at once."

Maloney slapped his hand joyously on his thigh. "Fine! Might a-known Luck would find a way out. I tell you this thing has been worrying me. Some of us wanted to take it off Curly's hands, but he wouldn't have it. He's a man from the ground up, Curly is. But your father found a way to butt in all right. Soapy couldn't stand out against the big ranchmen when they got together and meant business. He had to pull his freight."

"Let me tell him the good news, Dick," she said, eagerly.

"Sure. I'll send him right up."

Bronzed almost to a coffee brown, with the lean lithe grace of youth garbed in the picturesque regalia of the vaquero, Flandrau was a taking enough picture to hold the roving eye of any girl. A good many centered upon him now, as he sauntered forward toward the Cullison box cool and easy and debonair. More than one pulse quickened at sight of him, for his gallantry, his peril and his boyishness combined to enwrap him in the atmosphere of romance. Few of the observers knew what a wary vigilance lay behind that careless manner.

Kate gathered her skirts to make room for him beside her.

"Have you heard? He has left town."

"Who?"

"Soapy Stone. The cattlemen served notice on him to go. So he left."

A wave of relief swept over the young man. "That's your father's fine work."

"Isn't it good?" Her eyes were shining with gladness.

"I'm plumb satisfied," he admitted. "I'm not hankering to shoot out my little differences with Soapy. He's too handy with a six-gun."

"I'm so happy I don't know what to do."

"I suppose now the hold-up will be put off. Did Sam and Blackwell go with him?"

"No. He went alone."

"Have you seen Sam yet?"

"No, but I've seen Laura London. She's all the nice things you've said about her."

Curly grew enthusiastic. "Ain't she the dandiest girl ever? She's the right kind of a friend. And pretty—with that

"He Shot This Hat Off the Fellow's Head."

short crinkly hair the color of ripe nuts! You would not think one person could own so many dimples as she does when she laughs. It's just like as if she had absorbed sunshine and was warming up with her smile."

"I see she has made a friend of you."

"You bet she has."

Miss Cullison shot him a swift, slanting glance. "If you'll come back this afternoon you can meet her. I'm going to have all those dimples and all that sunshine here in the box with me."

"Maybe that will draw Sam to you."

"I'm hoping it will But I'm afraid not. He avoids us. When they met he wouldn't speak to father."

"That's the boy of it. Just the same he feels pretty bad about the quarrel. I reckon there's nothing to do but keep an eye on him and be ready for Soapy's move when he makes it."

"I'm afraid something will happen to Sam."

"Now don't you worry, Miss Kate. Sam is going to come out of this all right. We'll find a way out for him yet."

Behind her smile the tears lay close. "You're the best friend. How can we ever thank you for what you're doing for Sam?"

A steer had escaped from the corral and was galloping down the track in front of the grandstand with its tail up. The young man's eyes followed the animal absently as he answered in a low voice.

"Do you reckon I have forgot how a girl took a rope from my neck one night? Do you reckon I ever forget that?"

"It was nothing. I just spoke to the boys."

"Or that I don't remember how the man I had shot went bail for a rustler he did not know?"

"Dick knew you. He told us about you."

"Could he tell you any good about me? Could he say anything except that I was a worthless no-'count——?"

She put her hand on his arm and stopped him. "Don't! I won't have you say such things about yourself. You were just a boy in trouble."

"How many would have remembered that? But you did. You fought good for my life that night. I'll pay my debt, part of it. The whole I never could pay."

His voice trembled in spite of the best he could do. Their eyes did not meet, but each felt the thrill of joy surging thru their veins.

THE preliminaries in the rough riding contest took place that afternoon. Of the four who won the right to compete in the finals, two were Curly Flandrau and Dick Maloney. They went together to the Cullison box to get the applause due them.

Kate Cullison had two guests with her. One was Laura London, the other he had never seen. She was a fair young woman with thick ropes of yellow hair coiled round her head. Deep-breasted and robust-loined, she had the rich coloring of the Scandinavian race and much of the slow grace peculiar to its women.

The hostess pronounced their names.

(Continued on Page 16.)

THE VALLEY OF SLEEPING SLAVES

BY VICTOR ROUSSEAU

A Brief Outline.

There were only two white men in Novo Redondo, a settlement in tropical Africa, and their meeting came about in a peculiar way. It was in a barroom where the Portuguese negroes, slaves, overseers, plantation owners, and professional gamblers congregated to forget the heat over a game and a drink.

JOHN CARTER, Englishman, was not quite himself, but he knew that Marie D' Vaz was being insulted by a Portuguese,

NADEAU. Carter had never heard of the girl before, but, as he told

MATT BARRETT afterward, he wasn't "going to stand by and hear that said of her. Barrett had plunged into the fight because Carter was the first white man he had seen during the six days he had been in Novo Redondo. He owned a mine which he hoped would prove valuable for its rubies, and, taking a liking to Carter after their strange meeting, Barrett invited him to go along to inspect the property.

DOM EMILIO PAEZ, a rich plantation owner, had offered a price for the mine, and on their way they stopped as guests at his plantation. Paez turned out to be the master of the overseer, Nadeau, and the guardian of

MARIE D' VAZ. Paez humiliated the girl by relating her most intimate history—her father had betrayed the wife of Dom Emilfo and instead of casting the child off, Emilio had kept her with him after the death of his wife (the natives said Dom Emilio had killed her) and revenged himself by telling the story in her presence to chance visitors.

Carter and Barren were enraged by the cruelty Emilio showed toward the girl, and took themselves off, determined to "fight him to a finish." The next day they both became mysteriously ill, and, fearing the sleeping sickness, consulted

VON SCHWERIN, a German professor, who was making experiments with the tsetse fly.

Carter and Barrett finally engaged porters for the trip by the help of

DA COSTA, one of Dom Emilio's men. Maria D'Vaz took pains to warn them that the trip they were about to make to San Rocal would endanger them. The two set out anyway with a negro, finally reaching San Rocal where the porters deserted, saying they would return to Novo Rodondo. At the spot where Barrett's mine was located, according to his map, they actually found some rubies. But even this discovery did not excite Carter who was evincing symptoms of the deadly sleeping sickness. Matt suspected Von Schwerin of inoculating them with the germs.

PART III.

CHAPTER IX.

OUT of the depths of unconsciousness Matt Barrett struggled into life. It seemed as if steel fingers pressed upon his eyelids. Only the sense of danger enabled him to get his eyes open; and, when he was awake, he lay still for some minutes, not knowing where he was or what had happened to him.

Then he saw Carter at his side, and he remembered. Carter's face was drawn and emaciated, and he hardly seemed to breathe.

Matt staggered to his feet and looked about him. He was in a smaller valley than the last. Something was moving at the farther end, but, with the rising sun in his eyes, he could not see it clearly, and he was engrossed with the solution of the immediate problem—to find an exit.

The cliff down which they had fallen looked even more precipitous by daylight. It rose almost sheer overhead to the crown of cactus and thorn shrub. No man could fall down that and live.

He walked a little way along, puzzling over it, until of a sudden he heard the same plunging among the thorns above him; then two bodies came tumbling down and lit upon the sand.

Matt hurried toward them. They were negroes, apparently in the earlier stage of the sickness. One slept where he had fallen, the other got up and stared stupidly about him.

And then Matt perceived at once the solution of the mystery and Dom Emilio's trap. Straight up the precipice there ran a sort of kink in the smooth walls, evidently once a waterfall. But it had been converted by human hands into a human chute; it was at just such an angle as a man might slide down by without killing himself upon the sandy bottom. The stone had been polished smooth by the ancient torrent, and here and there were signs of where projecting bowlders had been blown away, and gaps filled in with stone.

It was a human trap, and, even as Matt looked, a third body came sliding down and landed at his feet uninjured.

And suddenly Matt realized that the valley was filled with negroes. There were hundreds of them, mostly gathered at the far end in their blind, mechanical onward movement—that same migration which had carried them along the trail to the cliff's edge and over.

If one-fifth of the returning slaves took the way that Matt and Carter had taken, thousands must pass into Dom Emilio's trap. It was like a succession of salmon weirs, only here the blind, instinctive movement was downward to the sea along the dried up river bed and lakes, instead of upward.

But to what purpose? Matt did not stop to answer that. He flung himself at the chute, striving with all his might to obtain a footing on the smooth stone.

Twenty feet above him he saw a small sapling growing. He fancied that if he could grasp that he might somehow work his way up to the top. But he always fell back exhausted, and at last he recognized that the attempt was impossible. Dom Emilio's workmen had been too well inspired in their devilish task. Whatever crevices there might be higher up, the bottom fifteen feet were smooth as glass, and, as Matt now perceived, mortared.

Matt rested, for the attempt had utterly fatigued him. He looked down the valley again. The slaves were congregating in a mass at the funnel edge. Of a sudden Matt realized that this was the black river that he had seen, flowing into the black lake.

There must be thousands of prisoners. But—what did Dom Emilio want with them?

The valley seemed about a mile in length. Matt began to work his way around it, looking up all the time to see if any ascent were possible. But there was none. The place must have been a lake of enomous depth, and the sun-scorched, precipitous walls were as bare and smooth as glass.

Here and there he passed groups of prostrate sleepers, and half-dazed men were wandering everywhere. When he reached the end, where the walls came together, he realized that it was more than instinct which had gathered the crowd in that place. And suddenly he saw that the bottom of the valley was closed with meshes of barbed wire.

The wire was of the most modern military make, and quite impassable, but there was a gate set into it, and beyond Matt saw a third valley, with orderly rows of huts, and black sentries with rifles on their shoulders, pacing to and fro. Beyond this the masts of a tall ship loomed up out of a bay.

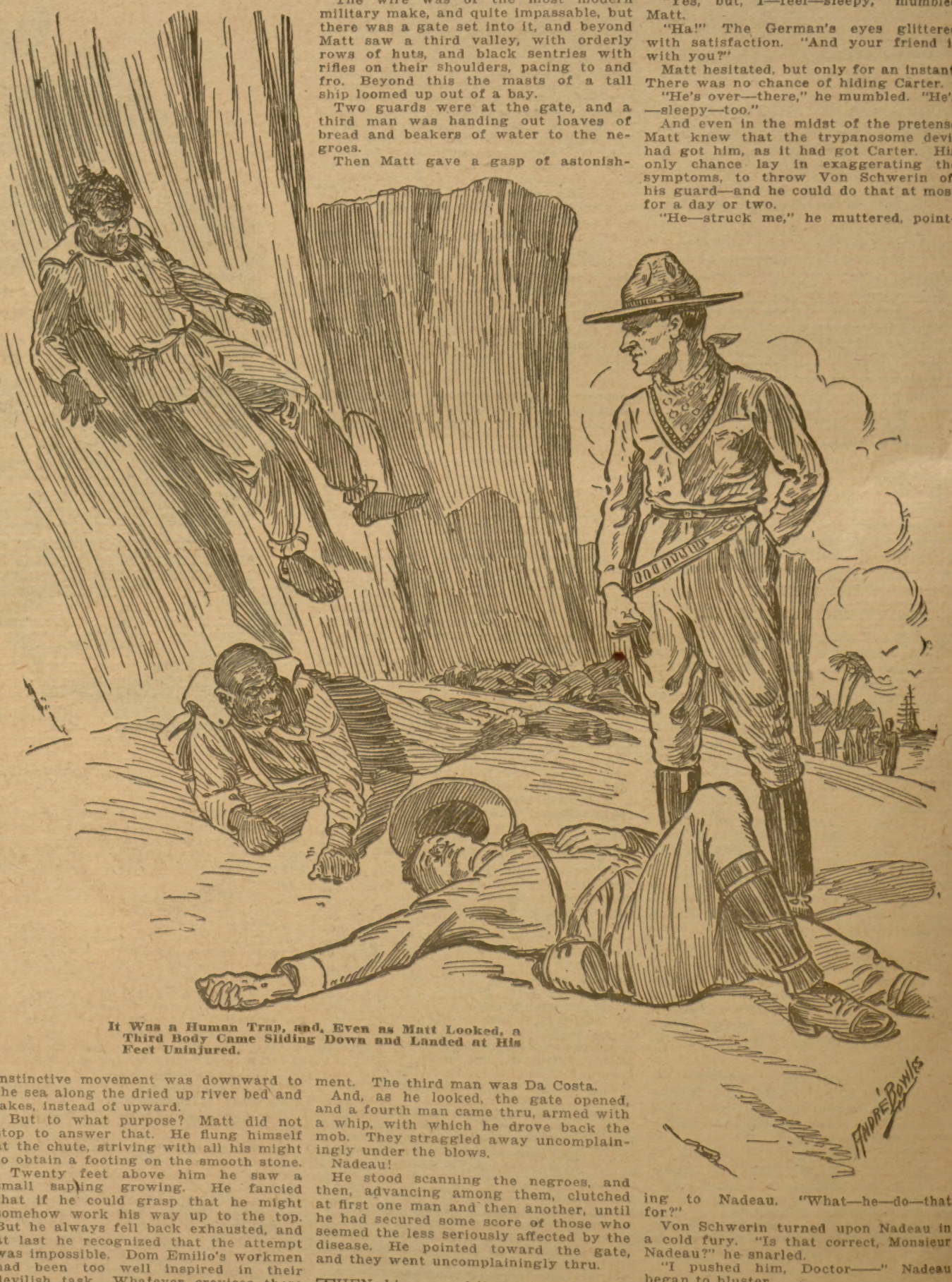
Two guards were at the gate, and a third man was handing out loaves of bread and beakers of water to the negroes.

Then Matt gave a gasp of astonishment. The third man was Da Costa.

And, as he looked, the gate opened, and a fourth man came thru, armed with a whip, with which he drove back the mob. They straggled away uncomplainingly under the blows.

Nadeau!

He stood scanning the negroes, and then, advancing among them, clutched at first one man and then another, until he had secured some score of those who seemed the less seriously affected by the disease. He pointed toward the gate, and they went uncomplainingly thru.



It Was a Human Trap, and, Even as Matt Looked, a Third Body Came Sliding Down and Landed at His Feet Uninjured.

THEN his eyes fell on Matt, and a gleam of triumph shone in his eyes. He came forward, wielding the whip, but cautiously, scanning Matt's face carefully, as if he were not sure.

With that Matt saw their one chance of ultimate safety. He let his eyelids fall. Nadeau laid a great yellow hand upon his shoulder, and Matt stirred slumberously.

"Too bad! Too bad!" said Nadeau mockingly, and struck him with his full force in the face.

Matt reeled, but did not even wince. He recovered his balance and stood mumbling and muttering, and peering stupidly at the Portuguese.

Nadeau, chuckling, drove in his score of men, and went to one of the huts, standing alone in a separate barbed wire inclosure. Immediately the door opened. Von Schwerin came out, dressed in whites. He followed Nadeau and walked deliberately up to Matt, and stood surveying him thoughtfully. Then he stretched out one hand and pulled down one of Matt's eyelids. A gleam of satisfaction shone in his china-blue eyes. He clapped Matt on the shoulder.

"Well, how are we feeling now?" he asked. "Fever left you, eh?"

"Yes, but, I—feel—sleepy," mumbled Matt.

"Ha!" The German's eyes glittered with satisfaction. "And your friend is with you?"

Matt hesitated, but only for an instant. There was no chance of hiding Carter.

"He's over—there," he mumbled. "He's—sleepy—too."

And even in the midst of the pretense Matt knew that the trypanosome devil had got him, as it had got Carter. His only chance lay in exaggerating the symptoms, to throw Von Schwerin off his guard—and he could do that at most for a day or two.

"He—struck me," he muttered, pointing to Nadeau. "What—he—do—that for?"

Von Schwerin turned upon Nadeau in a cold fury. "Is that correct, Monsieur Nadeau?" he snarled.

"I pushed him, Doctor——" Nadeau began to bluster.

"You heard Dom Emilio's instructions that these gentlemen are to be treated with respect?"

The big Portuguese fidgetted, and began to look uncomfortable.

"Remember that orders are to be

obeyed," said Von Schwerin menacingly. "Have the Senhor Carter brought here, and their properties, except the firearms, which, Mr. Barrett——" he turned to Matt suavely—"are not permitted in our encampment, except by special order. You have no revolver with you?"

He ran his hands with the lightest of gestures up and down Matt's clothes.

"Be seated, Mr. Barrett!" he said. "We'll have your tent here soon, and pitch it in that shaded place, under the rock, beside the little stream of water. You and your friend must consider yourselves our guests, as long as you decide to stay with us. And, as soon as I have leisure, may I hope to be permitted to show you over my laboratory, as I promised?"

The mocking malice was veiled with so smooth an utterance that Barrett could only writhe inwardly. "Don't—want to—stay long," he muttered. "Ili—both ill—don't know what's the matter unless sleeping sickness."

Von Schwerin tapped him reprovingly upon the shoulder. "Sleeping sickness, did you say?" he repeated. "Nonsense, my friend. I told you white men don't get the disease—quite impossible to get it except by inoculation."

At this point four bearers came out of the inclosure, carrying the tent and outfit, minus the weapons. Matt was astounded. He could not understand how they had been taken there. But he sat down and pretended to sleep, while the tent was being pitched, in a weariness that was only partly feigned. Von Schwerin watched him for a few moments, and then turned on his heel.

Half an hour later Carter made his appearance, being borne on the linked hands of two negroes. His face was beginning to grow puffy, Matt noticed his eyes were closed, and he was breathing heavily.

The bearers placed him on his blankets inside the tent, and Matt, as if awakening, crawled inside. For some minutes Matt remained perfectly motionless, conscious of no greater wish than to rest just in that position for ever. Then he shook the bonds of sleep from him.

He touched Carter upon the shoulder. After repeated shakings, Carter opened his eyes.

"Needn't carry me," he muttered. "I—can—get down and walk."

"John," said Matt, "pull yourself together, old man, if you can, and listen to me."

With an immense effort Carter struggled bolt upright and fixed his eyes on his friend's.

"I know what's—matter with me," he said. "Sleeping sickness. Not as bad as it looks. Jolly feeling, by Jove! You got it, too, Matt?"

"I have," Matt answered, "and if we're to get out of here we have just about four-and-twenty hours to do it in, because that's the longest I can hold out. Can you brace up, old man? Von Schwerin's here."

"Thought that—Dutch devil—'oculated us in Notorondo," mumbled Carter. "I'll brace up. Just wait—half jiffy, Matt!"

And, having used up all his efforts, he closed his eyes again and relapsed instanly into his stertorous slumber. And Matt realized that nothing could be done by Carter's aid.

CHAPTER X.

HALF an hour later Nadeau and a negro appeared at the tent door. The big Portuguese went up to Matt and looked at him closely as he lay on his blanket with his eyes closed, half dozing, yet fighting off sleep.

"Dinner is served, Senor Barrett," he said politely, accompanying his words with a vicious kick which Matt, forewarned by the look on Nadeau's face, received with only a slight movement of protest. "Will you condescend to take your dinner, Senhor Carter?" he continued, kicking the Englishman, who hardly stirred out of his slumber. "Bring in the dinner!" he added, turning to the negro.

The latter, who was waiting at the tent entrance, went outside, and reappeared with a large tray, spread with the mockery of a linen napkin. On this were two bowls of soup, some thinly sliced bread and butter, a silver coffee pot, and two cups and saucers, with silver spoons.

Nadeau put a little stool between the two ocupants of the tent, and the negro set down the tray. As soon as the pair had withdrawn Matt rose and partly emptied the contents of one of the bowls on the ground. He crumpled up a piece of bread and butter, as if he had eaten it. He had no intention of trusting himself to von Schwerin's mercies.

Nadeau reappeared a few minutes later.

"The doctor trusts you liked your soup, Senhor," he said to Matt. "It is regrettable that Senhor Carter is to unwell to eat. There is a joint with vegetables, if you are ready, Senhor."

A step sounded outside the tent, and Matt heard von Schwerin's voice.

"He has drunk half a bowl, doctor," he heard Nadeau saying. "The other has taken nothing. I told him there was a joint to follow."

"Never mind the joint," answered Von Schwerin. "We'll see if they are hungry by evening."

"Very good, doctor," answered Nadeau, and called to the negro to take out the tray.

The man came in, and, stooping over the tray, looked from Carter to Matt with a furtive expression. Something suspicious about his attitude made Matt sit up. He opened his eyes, and the negro slipped a tiny envelope to him.

"For your friend, Senhor," he whispered; and Matt has just time to slip the envelope beneath his blanket when Von Schwerin entered.

He looked at Matt, then went to Carter's side, and, kneeling down, applied his stethscope to the Englishman's chest. He felt his pulse, and averted an eyelid. Then he rose and went to Matt's side.

"Do not rise, Mr. Barrett," he said. "I am afraid your friend is gravely ill, and the worst of it is that you both present the same symptoms. I must confess that it has all the appearance of sleeping sickness."

"Tokl—tokl—tokl!" mumbled Matt.

He guessed that the soup had been drugged, and that an apparent accentuation of his malady would best throw von Schwerin off his guard. The German threw back his head and roared with laughter.

"Oh, yes, atoxyl will cure the sleeping sickness," he answered. "But it is not for you, gentlemen. That is the penalty for insisting upon the discovery of Dom Emilio's secret. Dom Emilio wishes that you be treated with all possible courtesy, but ataxyl—no, Mr. Barrett. That we keep to cure the returned slaves, so that they may be fit to renew their occupations. It is a charitable enterprise on which we are engaged, and our supply of atoxyl is strictly limited. Many poor men are dying because we have not sufficient of the remedy."

Matt all but started under the German's penetrating scrutiny. At last the meaning and purpose of the trap were clear, and it was a deviltry almost inconceivable by any normal mind—to cure the wretched victims so that they might once more be transferred to the cocoa islands.

It was the scheme of a master-brain, this wholesale winning of life from death, to fill the chattel-mart, when all the avenues in the interior of the Dark Continent had been so closed that slave-raiding no longer paid its way. Matt knew that it was Von Schwerin and not Dom Emilio who had conceived the plan.

There must be millions in it. And, once cured, the victims, confrontd with their witnessed mark upon the contract, would have no redress. The deviltry might well masquerade as a charitable undertaking.

That explained everything—the valley into which the nomad horde was precipitated, as it stumbled blindly along the homeward trail; the second valley, into which the wanderers were admitted thru the gate, day by day, or perhaps hour by hour, for treatment, cure and shipment back to the Guinea Isles in the big vessel off shore.

CONSCIOUS that Von Schwerin had made the statement as a test, Matt let his head fall on his breast in the characteristic manner, and pretended to recover consciousness with a start, noting the while with horror how near to real the stimulation was.

"Tokl—tokl—tokl!" he mumbled again.

A shade of annoyance flickered across Von Schwerin's face. The German was deceived.

"Please pay more attention, Mr. Barrett!" he commanded peremptorily. "You are making me repeat myself, and I do not like to do so. What was it that I told you about atoxyl?"

"Cure sleep-sickness," answered Matt. "He's got it. You—cure the poor chap?"

"No, Mr. Barrett, I am afraid I cannot engage to cure the poor chap," answered Von Schwerin with some asperity. "It is not Dom Emilio's wish, and he has full responsibility for what is done. We are compelled to devote it exclusively to those for whom this institution was established. You gentlemen insisted upon coming here against Dom Emilio's representations; you are entirely free to leave when you desire—but you must find your own remedy."

He paused and looked at Matt keenly as the American sat blinking drowsily at him.

"And, in view of the hold that the disease has taken on both of you," he added, "I recommend you, as a physician, to leave San Rocal immediately. The climate is enervating," he added with devilish malice. "You should take a sea voyage, and consult a specialist in Germany—if any can be induced to attend the murderers of an entire nation!"

He hissed the pent-up venom of his race into Matt's ear. Matt swayed to and fro, a seraphic smile upon his face.

"In your present condition," went on Von Schwerin, "I am afraid that an inspection of my laboratory would hardly interest you. But if there is anything that you desire, prior to your departure, Mr. Nadeau has instructions to supply you with as far as possible, my dear Mr. Barrett, for you must consider that you and your friend are both our guests pending your departure from San Rocal."

The German ceased speaking, and seemed lost in thought.

"Death," he said with startling suddenness, "is merely a resolution and regrouping of the constituent atoms into a new form. If the byproduct of life known to us as 'consciousness' ceases to manifest itself, the sum total of the cell consciousness at least survives. So, when a wandering star shatters the cosmic universe, may we not believe that each fragment of the ensuing nebula carries with it the germs of conscious self-realization?"

And he went out, letting the tent flap fall behind him. Matt shook his fist at him.

"D—n your imagination!" he swore.

And then he realized that he had neither shaken his fist nor spoken. He was dreaming the words and action, dreaming his life away. Already he felt perceptibly weaker; he knew that four-and-twenty hours would mark the limit of his strength, as he had told Carter.

He remembered the little letter under under his blankets, and, with an immense effort, he put his hand down and drew it out. With another equal effort he opened it.

Inside were two papers, a tiny phial, and a tiny hypodermic needle. Matt surveyed them all without interest. When at length he unfolded the letter, the reading excited in him scarcely a passing interest. He read:

Dom Emilio leaves tonight for the place where I fear with all my heart you will be. He has told me all his intentions in one of his outbursts of madness. The man who accompanies him will deliver this for my sake if he can. I am planning for you and praying for you, and your friend, Senhor Barrett. Do not abandon hope until it is impossible to hope any longer.

The note was signed "Maria D'Vaz."

And then a postscript:

I have just found these in the room which the doctor occupied, and I know the phial contains atoxyl. He was experimenting with a new variety of it while he was here. He left the needle also. I know that a single dose is useless, but perhaps,

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in great need, it will help you, if I cannot help you. M. V.

Matt unfolded the second paper. It was merely a map of the district. The Government survey map, which he had obtained at the capital, had ended at the ruby mine. This one showed the series of valleys to the sea. The road which they had taken branched off from the main road some distance back. The main road ran along the heights above, descending toward San Rocal and the creek, thus leading immediately into the mouth of the valley beyond, which was guarded by the barbed wire and the sentries.

By this road the tent and supplies must have been carried by Joseph and the porters, after the simulated flight. Probably these had been the headman's instructions from the beginning.

But all this meant hardly anything to Matt. He sat on his blanket, fingering the phial and hypodermic. In that tiny bottle, he knew, meant a new chance of life; but first he wanted to sleep. Besides, Carter was too low to be troubled. What was the use?

A picture flashed into his mind. It was Carter and Maria D'Vaz, standing with joined hands. An Englishman and a woman with black blood in her veins! Matt had shaken his head at that; the thought was horrible.

And she wanted to save Carter.

But if he prolonged Carter's life, he only called him back to new suffering.

He started up. The phial had fallen from his fingers, and he was dozing again. He had given himself twenty-four hours, but it seemed as if he could never awaken from this crushing inertia. With all his resolution he took the phial and syringe in his hand and crawled to Carter's side. Each step seemed to spin out thru an eternity.

During another eternity he pried out the tiny cork with a piece of pointed stick. During a third he rolled back Carter's sleeve.

Then, filling the hypodermic, he injected half the contents into the Englishman's arm—and paused.

If there was virtue in the phial, his strength was needed more than Carter's. And, without hesitation, he injected the remainder of the contents into his own arm and crawled back into his blankets.

CHAPTER XI.

"DINNER is served, Senhor!" said a voice in his ear; and a vigorous kick from Nadeau followed it.

Matt started, and the big Portuguese leaped back and looked at him with keen scrutiny as he sat up, blinking.

"Don't—wand—dinner," mumbled Matt.

"Very good, Senhor. But it was the doctor's wish that dinner should be served," said Nadeau, bringing in the stool, on which the attendant negro placed a tray, containing two plates of meat and vegetables, and the coffee pot and cups.

Matt rolled himself in his blankets again, and Nadeau went out, grinning. When the American was a little further gone he meant to give him back everything that he had received that night in the bar-room. He was rather dismayed at the slow progress of his disease.

Matt, sitting up, was conscious of renewed strength. He had slept, without intending to, all the afternoon. Now, languid tho he was, he no longer felt that pressing weight upon his eyelids.

What was it, then? His eyes lit upon the empty phial among the blankets. Suddenly he remembered. And he crawled over to Carter's side.

Carter was slumbering profoundly, but the puffy look about his eyes was gone, he was breathing more easily, and his face was moist with sweat. Matt did not awaken him.

He pulled out the little note and the plan of the road, and studied them attentively. For the first time he understood their meaning. And he saw that this miracle, which had given them a new lease of life, would operate for just twenty-four hours longer. A respite only. Whatever was to be done must be done that night.

Suddenly Matt became aware that he was acutely hungry. And here a new problem presented itself. If he ate one of the plates of meat—and he would have eaten both—Von Schwerin would become suspicious, would examine him and detect the imposture.

He went over the plates, picking out scraps here and there, and making as much of a meal as he could contrive to do without giving the suspicion that he had eaten anything. When he had finished the plates certainly contained less food, yet it could not have been said that their contents seemed to have been disturbed.

That done, Matt lay back and considered. It was obvious that, unless Maria D'Vaz could aid them, which he did not think possible, the only chance lay in getting Von Schwerin in his power, and forcing him to inoculate them and permit them to pass thru the barrier toward San Rocal.

Suddenly a thought flashed into Matt's brain that set his pulses pounding.

He had had his revolver when he started in search of Carter. He had lost it in his tumble down the chute. But the revolver could not have become wedged anywhere on that slippery descent. It must have fallen close by where he had landed. If he could find it!

He looked out cautiously. The sun was nearing the horizon. The space between the tent and the barbed wire barrier was black with negroes. Of a sudden a chant was raised, a hideous, crooning song to which a thousand bodies swayed on their staggering legs.

It was a praise of Von Schwerin; something about the magic that would make them well and fit to resume their labors in the happy cocoa fields. It was spontaneous, and typically negro. It left the eerie impression on Matt of primeval powers swayed by the master-devil in the laboratory.

Watching, Matt saw the guards handing out to the men their evening meal. That would take more than an hour, perhaps two hours. Now, if ever, was his chance to go for the revolver without being detected.

Matt went quietly out of the tent, crawling on his hands and knees and working his way around to the rear, along the edge of the precipice. There, satisfied that he was not observed, he broke into a run that immediately sent the breath wheezing thru his lungs. He was no longer sleepy, but he was almost too weary to move.

GASPING and panting, he made his way along the rock wall until he came to the place down which he had fallen. At the bottom lay a group of a half dozen negroes, some asleep, one or two staring stupidly about them. They took no notice of Matt as he approached and began searching in the sand.

The sun dipped, the shadows were lengthening across the valley. Matt searched desperately, scooping up the sand and tossing it hither and thither. Minutes went by, and it was growing darker. He was beginning to despair when he noticed the fingers of the nearest negro working and twitching over something that the man held on his knees. It was the revolver!

Matt took it from him, and the fingers continued to twitch over emptiness. He broke it; it was fully loaded. He took the cartridges out one by one, shook out the sand, and replaced them. Then, slipping the weapon into his pocket, with immense elation in his heart, he made his way back to the tent again.

Carter was awake, sitting up and rubbing his eyes. He greeted Matt irritably.

"Where the dickens have you been?" he demanded.

Matt pulled the muzzle of the revolver out of his pocket and showed it to him. "Six shots," he said. "We'll get that Dutch devil tonight if you're game."

"Of course I'm game," answered Carter. "The man's an out-and-out rotter to play a trick like that, with his talk about primeval nebulas."

"You heard him, then?"

"Of course I heard him. Felt Nadeau kick me, too—twice, only it didn't seem to make any particular impression on me at the time. Seem to have beaten the sleeping sickness, eh, Matt? How about you?"

"John," said Matt, "we haven't beaten it! We've got a respite at the last minute, that's all. Here's something for you which I took the liberty of opening." He handed him the girl's letter.

Carter read it thru and whistled expressively. "Well, where's that dope she speaks of?" he demanded.

"Half of it's in you and half in me," answered Matt. "I thought, under the circumstances, it might be excusable to borrow some. Look at your arm!"

Carter looked and stretched out his hand. "You're a brick, old man," he said. "Out of the jaws of death, what?"

"I tell you, John," said Matt, "it was the hardest proposition I ever tackled getting across the tent and opening that bottle and sticking the stuff into you. Can you keep up the game till after dark? And better lie down; Von Schwerin's as likely as not to be in to gloat over our approaching end."

They got into their blankets. But Von Schwerin did not come. Once the flap was lifted and they saw Da Costa's face peering at them; he went away and left them. Gradually the chanting of the negroes died away. Matt and Carter sat at the foot of the blankets, looking out toward the barbed wire inclosure, where only the dimmest outlines of the huts were visible.

"We've got to break in—or break out, which ever way you choose to look at it," said Matt grimly. "We've got to make the main San Rocal road. And, on the way, we've got to get some atoxyl from Von Schwerin. Is that an impossible proposition?"

"I'm game," answered Carter. "What's your idea, Matt?"

"As far as I could see," answered Matt, "and as I judge, there will be about 500 negroes in all, either undergoing the cure or already aboard that ship in the creek. I put it at 500, because that's the limit capacity of those old hookers, stuffed from stem to stern. Probably there are a couple of dozen native guards with rifles. That would allow three shifts of eight men apiece. And there are Nadeau and Da Costa and Von Schwerin.

"My idea is this: The sentry at the gate must be overcome. He wont be suspicious. None of these staggering natives has ever attempted violence. And the ones that are cured are too grateful and eager to get back to their happy cocoa fields. They've forgotten the lash, the servitude. That's negro psychology. Anyway, they wouldn't make a break in this direction. So, as I said, the sentry will probably either be asleep or dreaming of some yellow girl in San Rocal, or wherever she is.

"If we can overcome the sentry without his uttering a sound, we'll have the run of the inclosure. They won't know that we're white men. In the night all men are gray, in this country, at any rate. One of us will then take the sentry's place, the other will take his rifle and do a turn or two among the guards between the huts, till he gets the lay of the land. If any other guard speaks to him, a grunt will do for an answer. These negroes are from a dozen different tribes, in all probability, and don't know each other's languages. Then he'll break into the laboratory, grab all the atoxyl he can get hold of, and we'll both make for the shore road. How does the proposition appeal to you?"

"Excellent," said Carter. "I'll have to be sentry, because I'm still pretty shaky. But how about the Senhorita's plans for us?"

"She seemed doubtful about their success. I don't think we can afford to wait upon the chance of something unexpected turning up in our favor."

"We'd better wait till the small hours."

"I should say, until the sentry is changed toward midnight. Then we'll have a clear two hours, at least, before us. And remember, John"—he laid his hand on Carter's shoulder—"that respite is for twenty-four hours only, and several of them are gone. And when we do get to the San Rocal road we'll have a tough job before us to reach Novo Redondo—especially if we don't succeed in finding the atoxyl."

CHAPTER XII.

THEY slept alternately in periods of an hour apiece. Each awakening was an anguish, but, with the uncertainty that lay ahead of them, Matt insisted on this. And it was sleep he felt, not merely lassitude.

Weak as he was, he felt that the disease, tho it lurked in his system, no doubt, ready to blaze out when the transitory effects of the atoxyl were gone, had been temporarily routed. Carter, too, seemed to have shaken it off effectively. At 11 that night they crouched behind the flap of the tent, straining their eyes upon the gate.

It was impossible to see anything, however. Matt turned to Carter.

"I'm going to crawl out and investigate," he said. "You stay here, John."

"I'll come with you," answered Carter. "We might as well make this our farewell journey."

They went softly out of the flap, and, lying on the ground, worked their way toward the barbed wire. Lying a few yards away, they could not see much more than in the tent. Presently, however, the figure of the sentry became visible. He was carrying his rifle at the trail. He stood it up against the wire, and yawned audibly, stretching his arms. Then he sat down on the ground, his back against the gate.

Once or twice he got up and resumed his pacing, always returning to his place. The opportunity was almost irresistible to the watchers—only it was impossible to know how soon the relief would arrive.

Occasionally the form of one of the guards came into sight between the huts, but it was evident that discipline was lax within the inclosure. There was, in fact, nothing to fear. One unarmed man could have routed an army of the diseased negroes in the outer valley, and those undergoing treatment were too content with their lot to plan any trouble.

An hour must have passed before the relief came in the form of a second negro. He came unarmed, and the two stood chattering together for several minutes before the first man took his departure. The second negro sat down exactly where the first had sat, and began to stretch himself and yawn in the same way.

The two watchers began to crawl forward slowly across the few yards that separated them from the inclosure. They were within a foot of the man when he started and turned his head. Matt could just see the whites of his eyes. He clapped his left hand over his mouth, and thrust the pistol against his forehead.

Not a word was spoken. The negro, petrified with fear, did not utter a sound.

Matt removed his hand, still keeping the weapon leveled, he made the sentry get up, and walked behind him to the gate. This was a barbed wire, like the fence, but woven almost as closely as a carpet. Two strong steel posts supported it, and it was held by a formidable padlock.

Matt put out his hand and found the padlock open. Even Von Schwerin had not succeeded in overcoming the inertia of the Portuguese African.

Matt guided the ex-sentry out of the inclosure, and made him crawl into the tent. Once inside, he struck a match. "You stay there till morning," he said. "If you show your head, or scream, you'll be killed."

It was doubtful if the man altogether understood, for he was a raw negro from the interior; but he understood the

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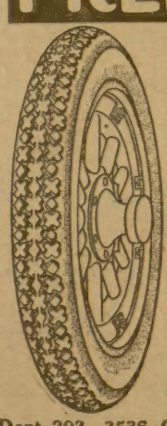

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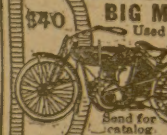

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threat of the revolver against his head again, and, shaking with terror, flung himself upon the ground at Matt's feet. Matt went out satisfied. At the gate he saw Carter, holding the rifle. He took it from him and gave him the revolver.

"I hadn't anything handy to tie our friend with," he said, "but if you'll look in at the tent once in a while and flourish this at him, I think it'll hold him. Good luck, John. I'll be back for you as soon as I've got the atoxyl. If anything develops, walk straight down the road for the shore, and don't wait for me."

"If anything starts, I'll be with you," answered Carter, yawning.

When Matt had gone a little distance he opened the breech and felt for the bullet. As he had expected, the rifle was unloaded.

However, he had come to the conclusion that there was little to fear. With Von Schwerin and Nadeau disposed of, the guards would hardly be likely to put up any fight.

He started off in the middle of the road, passing a row of palm-huts on either side of him. There was no sign of any sentinel. Silence reigned unbroken over Von Schwerin's city of slaves.

Matt counted not more than a score of huts, each of which could have contained ten men at the outside. He had over estimated the number of Von Schwerin's patients, and probably of the guards also. He was growing more and more confident Von Schwerin was the only danger, and it was probable that he would be asleep.

There were one or two buildings, hidden in the dense bush that clothed the sides of the low hills, standing some distance back from the road, and Matt resolved to investigate these after he had ascertained the lay of the land. Then the murmur of the sea began to break upon his ears, and all at once he saw the masts of the ship, not a hundred feet distant. He had passed clean thru the little valley, and before him lay the San Rocal road. Across the creek gleamed a few lights from the little Portuguese town.

He stopped and cursed softly. If only it were not for the atoxyl, he could go back for Carter and take him away. There was nothing to hinder them.

For a moment he was tempted to do it, but the remembrance of their sickness came back to him with horrifying vividness. Without the atoxyl it would be impossible to get anywhere near Novo Redondo; and it was certain that, even if they could reach it, they could not obtain atoxyl there. Everything depended upon his success in raiding Von Schwerin's laboratory.

Matt saw a number of small houses dotted about among the trees, but they were mere indistinguishable shapes, and it was almost impossible to make out what purpose they served until one stumbled upon them. Usually they proved to be nothing but abandoned shacks of palm wood; the place had evidently once been a native settlement.

But suddenly, as he groped thru the bush, a single light flashed out not far away upon the hillside. It looked like acetylene or gasoline vapor, and the sudden gleam of it half blinded Matt for an instant.

Then it vanished abruptly, and Matt found himself staring into the darkness. He made his way in the direction from which the light had come, until at length he saw the faint edgings of some large windows illuminated from within behind shades. Then he realized that the appearance of the light had been due to the sudden opening of a door, which had been closed immediately after. This, then, was probably the laboratory.

Von Schwerin must be at midnight deviltries. Grasping the rifle under his arm, Matt started up the hill, following the course of a small path which began to disclose itself under a rising moon.

In a minute or two he saw in front of him a square brick building, with a large chimney. The shades were drawn closely enough about the four large windows to exclude all but the least glimmer of light from within. Matt listened at the door.

At first he could hear nothing but a slow, steady ticking, which he took to be that of a clock. Then he realized that it was the drip of water from a faucet. No longer could there be doubt that this was the laboratory. And it seemed empty. Probably the opening of the door had been Von Schwerin's exit for the night.

Just as he came to this conclusion he heard a grunt, and the movement of the German's body in a creaking chair. He tried the handle softly. The door was unlocked; it yielded.

"Who's there?" cried Von Schwerin's voice within.

Can you wait till June 26 when the last installment of this story appears? It contains the answer to all your wondering.

What did this diabolical German professor accomplish during those long hours when he carried on his "midnight deviltries" in his Satanic laboratory? Death and disease were the two silent spectators. Remember, June 26, is the number that unfolds the final solution.

"NOT ME!"

By Humphrey Mordeaux

JAMES T. LANGE was thru. In fact, he had expressed that sentiment with variations at least twenty times in the hour since leaving Dorothy Parkhurst's home. He added a few more resolutions of finality while packing his bag at the hotel, altho his weekend still had two days to run. If there had been a midnight train out he would have taken it, but there was no train leaving until 5:15 in the morning and he could do no better than wait for that.

He looked cynically at himself in the mirror. "After all," he reflected bitterly, "I am lucky. I was born to be a bachelor. I was bred to be a bachelor, and, my God, what a narrow escape! If she had accepted—"

But she hadn't accepted. That was exactly the point. Dorothy was a sensible girl and she had asked to have a while to think it over. He adored her good sense on most things, but seemed to think she should have tossed overboard all of her sanity merely because he had said he loved her. He hated people you couldn't depend on, yet that was exactly why he was cross with Dorothy. Most people puzzled him with paradoxes and she was puzzling him with her consistency. She wasn't heartless. He couldn't even charge her with playing with his affections. She was only asking for time. And he got mad. Men are like that sometimes.

He reached the station an hour before train time. Ordinarily he would have made the later train by a flying leap from the station as it pulled out. But now he couldn't get away fast enough. No more women. Not for him. Never again!

In the wearying interval before train time he confided as much to Sam Howe, the station master. He would have kept to himself outdoors, but the wind and snow made too barren and bleak a scene for even a disappointed lover.

"Come into the office, Jim, where it's warm," urged the agent. "Out kind o' early, ain't you?"

"Train on time?" asked the dejected lover, not desiring to be drawn into any explanations.

"No, she's an hour late already. Held up by the heavy snow."

James T. Lange grunted, kicked the railing, and said "d—n."

"But you ain't no worse off than that gal there," continued the station master, as he pointed to a woman who was pacing up and down outside. "She's been here for an hour, waiting for her husband, who's coming home from the war. I only know her by sight. She told me that when I asked her to stay in her till the No. 1 comes in. But she can't seem to keep quiet."

LANGE looked out at her with mixed emotions. Pity and scorn flickered across his face. "The poor wretch!" And again he thanked God he would always be single.

"You know men like us, Sam, are free," he continued to the station master, who was trying to make out from the telegraph ticker just how far behind No. 1 was now. "A man in love is a slave. All day he's shackled—his movements, his money, his mind—everything! But men like us, Sam, we can wander at will. Look at that poor, benighted creature shivering out there in the cold, with not enough sense to come in here where it's warm, for fear she'll miss the train. That's what love brings you to! Not for me!"

The irate James then permitted his mind to dwell on Dorothy. He wondered what she was doing at that moment—probably mooning around, wishing he would come back. He hoped so. It would do her good to meet refusal, even if it were a silent one. He could even see her imploring him to return. Well, he wouldn't—not now, anyhow.

Had he known that at that particular moment she was fast asleep his indignation would have bordered on insanity, as indeed his actions did. She had spent a half hour while disrobing weighing her part in the absurd quarrel and she was sure she had acted wisely. A life contract couldn't be signed like an autographed photograph. You had to do some thinking about it. Of course, Jim really loved her, but there were so many other considerations besides love—companionship, income, home, things like that. Oh, well, he'd soon be over it. In a day or two he'd be himself again. The dear boy! And with that as her last thought she fell asleep.

James T. Lange's black reverie was finally broken by the station master, who asked him when he intended coming back again.

"Never! Not me!" he replied like a martyr.

Whereupon Sam Howe inhaled an all comprehensive breath and smiled. So that was it. Jilted by Dorothy Parkhill.

A tired, strained, heartsick face peered in at the station window. It was the woman who had been waiting for the No. 1 to arrive.

"Could you tell me about the train?" she faltered, obviously worried.

"Hour late, lady. Won't you come in here and warm yourself?"

"No, thanks," she guessed she wouldn't. As she moved away her face reflected the most pitiful look of heartsick disappointment.

"What's the good of being tied to any one like that?" grumbled James the Jilted. "Only makes you miserable. Did you ever see a face so full of suffering as that woman's? Some more of your silly love."

HIS loquacious litany was interrupted some time later by the whistle of the train as it shrieked down the valley. Resolutely he picked up his bag, said good-by to Mr. Howe and went outdoors. The dawn was breaking faintly across the horizon, but the snow and wind continued with unabated fury. It was a bleak scene indeed, with only two figures standing on the long platform. The giant locomotive thundered by like a steel dinosaur. Its hot steam blew into their faces. Frightened by the proximity of the superhuman thing, the woman stepped closer to Lange as if for protection, while her eyes searched each passing day coach for a face that meant life to her. She pressed against Lange as if in a faint when she failed to see the face she was looking for among the few passengers getting off.

"Nora!" a voice fraught with tenderness called from behind him. He turned to see a giant of a man pick up the little woman and almost crush her in his arms.

"Dave! oh, Dave!" she cried. "Oh, my boy! Home, home to me! And I never even saw you get off the train. Oh, how I've waited! And now you're here, and I'm happy, happy."

"You little wonder," he said tenderly, and then gave her a make-believe scolding. "I ought to spank you—and I can only kiss you. Coming out in a mad storm like this, when you ought to be safely tucked away in bed."

"But, Dave, I've missed you so much. I just couldn't stay home. It's—it's not living with you away."

"There, there, little girl, it's all over now. We never will be separated again. I must get you home now and put you to bed. You're shivering. No getting up, do you mind, until I've cooked you a nice hot breakfast, dear little girl, worried baby."

What was the rest of his talk James T. Lange could not learn, for they passed out of hearing, looking smilingly into each other's eyes. Lange's eyes followed them toward their primrose paradise along a narrow path leading from the station, and there was longing and emptiness in his heart. But he didn't realize that this longing and emptiness was the purest and most fertile soil for the growing of a lover's litany.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor.

"Not me!" murmured James T. Lange, as he buttoned his overcoat closer around his neck and turned to plow his way thru the snow back to the hotel.

* * *

In Halcyon Days.

CALVIN LAURIE, a writer of 1681, sets forth prices too good to be true in his romance, "For a Free Conscience." He writes to friends of the Old World, describing conditions in America thus:

"Here wants nothing but people. There is not a poor body in the province.

"Pork and beef two pence per hundred. Fish and fowl plenty—oysters I think would serve all England.

"Indian wheat two shillings and sixpence per bushel.

"It is exceedingly good food every way and two or three hundred increase.

"Cyder good and plenty for one penny per quart.

"Good drink that is made of molasses stands in about two shillings per barrel wholesale like our eight shillings per barrel in England.

"Good vension, plenty, bought us in at eighteenpence per quarter. Eggs threepence per dozen. All things very plenty. Lard very good as I ever saw. Vines, walnuts, peaches and strawberries, and many other things in the woods."

Probably in those days they had committees to investigate the Low Cost of Living.

* * *

Celebrity Missed His Train.

"HOW did you enjoy your Mexican trip?"

"I was disappointed," replied the tourist.

"How so?"

"It was announced that Villa in person would rob our train, but he sent an understudy."

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Jones Keeps Faith With The Mole

The Story of a Necklace, a Crook and His Honor

"I Wouldn't Know Your Woman If I Met Her Right Here," Protested Jerky.

By Howard C. Kegley

THERE is an old saying about "honor among thieves," and this tale of Howard C. Kegley's bears it out. Who would have expected to find honor and a blind desire to play square down there in Chin Lo Chee's chop suey joint where the derelicts of the earth drifted, skulking to the opium bunks thru the sinister blackness of that subterranean night? Two-finger Thackeray, Jerky Usher, Joliet Jones—they were all followers of the strange crooked-straight code.

"JONES, I'll trouble you for the Adrienne Langdon necklace," said Detective Charley Schuler, in an undertone, as he paused beside a nattily dressed young fellow at the rail of the Oceania.

Schuler had been trailing the pearls for several months—from England to France; from France to America. He had learned that the necklace had been passed along to a "fence" in Paris, where it had again been cleverly transferred to "Joliet" Jones, who masqueraded as an art calendar salesman with a jewelry side-line for a blind.

If Schuler knew that Joliet had the Langdon necklace he didn't know it any better than Joliet knew that he knew it, and when the detective called for the showdown, just as the Oceania was tying up at the dock in New York the eminent safecracker and second-story man turned to the detective, with a sneer on his lips, and replied:

"You'll trouble me, no doubt, but not for the Langdon pearls, because here they go!"

He drew his right hand from the pocket of his coat, straightened out his fingers, shook apart the strands of a glistening string of pearls, and held them dangling in front of the detective's eyes for a moment.

Then, leaning far over the rail, he released his hold upon the jewels and they dropped down into the murky waters of the harbor, and out of sight forever.

"That's how you recover the Langdon necklace!" snapped Jones.

Now, Joliet had the reputation for burning his bridges behind him, so it is little wonder that Schuler fell for the grandstand play, overlooking the original necklace, which was concealed by a "rat" on the head of a nurse girl who was the master crook's cleverest inside worker.

After being detained on suspicion of robbery for a few days Joliet was reluctantly liberated by the New York police. Shortly thereafter, he and the nurse girl had a little reunion in Chicago where, for the first time in months, Joliet again clasped the precious pearls in his hands.

For a long time they debated as to the best way to dispose of them, and finally Joliet said that he would carry them on his person until such time as he could cash them in at a satisfactory price.

"Yes, and I'll probably never see them again, nor the equivalent of them," whimpered the nurse girl.

"Can the weeps!" growled the master crook. "You never got the worst of the deal from me yet, did you? Understand, I'll take care of the necklace; that's settled. If I sell it you'll get your half; if I keep it I'll give you your half."

Joliet's female companion was a tall and rather attractive blonde, perhaps a little less than 30 years of age. At times she wore jet-black eardrops. Her ears had been pierced, probably long before she became the accomplice of a crook.

On her left arm, just above the vaccination scar, was a small brown mole. Thru the georgette waist, such as vain women of her type who have shapely arms are fond of wearing, the mole could be seen quite plainly.

When she was in her teens the girl was known as Stella, but after making her second trip to the police station for floating worthless checks, she became known among the "dicks" as the Mole, and as such she finally came to be known by Joliet and the members of his gang.

Joliet and the Mole disappeared from Chicago the morning after the Bloomington postoffice robbery. Schuler knew they were gone, because he sought them as soon as he copied the finger prints that were left on a nickeled chisel which had rolled under a desk and been left behind by the safe crackers. The finger prints, needless to say, were none other than those of Joliet Jones.

A wide search, lasting over a period of several weeks, led Schuler to Philadelphia, where, he felt sure, Joliet was in hiding, but he was not able to ferret him out, and no wonder, for the crook, with several other members of his gang, hung out in a subterranean lodging house, down in the bowels of the earth, under Chin Lo Chee's chop suey joint.

They got there by pressing a jade ring on the finger of a great Chinese idol which stood against the wall in the back room at Chin's. The jade was a push button which caused the idol to turn half way round on a pivot and uncover a trap in the floor which gave them access to a ladder leading down into a cesspool of cracksmen and Confucianism.

TWO-FINGER Thackerey and Joliet sat at a grimy old oilcloth-covered table, playing pitch languidly, when Jerky Usher, still bent to accommodate himself to low and narrow underground passageways, limped into the smoky room. He handed Two-finger a package of tobacco and tossed Joliet a copy of the Morning Globe.

"Who won yesterday?" Joliet inquired, as he unfolded the paper.

"Listen to that guy," Jerky grumbled, addressing Two-finger. "By gar, he wants a feller to go out and risk his hide to get him a newspaper, and then expects him to bring it back and read it to him. I'm no amen-u-census, you know."

Joliet smiled insolently, in acknowledgment of the calldown, and turned to the sporting page. Baseball came first in his sphere of activities; police news was next.

He could only keep in touch with the outside world thru the newspapers, and, like women who go downtown to see what the other-women are wearing, he read the crime news every day, to see what other crooks were doing in the district.

Every crook has his peculiar style of working, and one yegg can often identify the work of another by reading a police reporter's detailed description of a "job."

It was over on the front page that Joliet ran across the item which interested him most.

"What the h—l!" he exclaimed, focusing his eyes upon a double-leaded news story. He read it excitedly. Two-finger ambled around and read it over Joliet's shoulder.

The item chronicled a fatal accident at a street corner near the Pennsylvania depot that morning. It stated that a tall, blonde woman, apparently 28 or 30

years old, had been struck down and instantly killed by an auto truck. Her skull had been fractured. There was nothing on her person by which she might be identified, except a small brown mole just above the vaccination mark on her left arm.

The item said that the body had been taken to the Alcott morgue, and it intimated that the remains would be buried in the potter's field unless identification could be established within twenty-four hours.

"What in thunder brought the Mole to Sleepyville?" Joliet asked himself. "The dicks must have been hot on her trail. She always was a sort of clinging vine; wanted to be under the sheltering wing of a man whenever things got exciting."

"Who said the Mole was here?" Jerky inquired.

"The Globe did," snapped Joliet.

"Where at?"

"Says right there that an unidentified woman, a blonde with a brown mole on her left arm, and wearing black ear-bobs, was killed today," growled Joliet. "How much straighter you want your tips?"

Jerky and Two-finger had their doubts about the victim being the Mole, but Joliet's mind was not to be changed by their opinions, and the longer he thought it over the more certain he became that he was right. Finally he called Jerky to his side.

"You're the only one that dares to venture far from our little family circle, he began, "so I want you to take a stroll up to Alcott's morgue and have a look at the deceased. Tell them you are looking for an outcast sister."

"I wouldn't know your woman if I met her right here," protested Jerky. "I've never seen her." He wasn't at all enthusiastic over the trend of events.

"You don't need to know her," was Joliet's retort. "You know a mole on the left arm if you see it, and you know blonde hair and blue eyes and black ear-bobs, don't you?"

"I reckon," sniffed Jerky, with dogged air.

"Well, then be on your way," was the command, "and if the girl checks up correct tell the gents to embalm the body and get it ready for burial—that you'll be back later in the day to arrange for the funeral. If it's her tell them to dress her up in a respectable outfit—doll 'er up—new rags and all that sort of thing. If she's our sidekick the least that we can do is to give her a decent burial."

WITH heavy heart Jerky ascended the ladder and went forth on his strange errand. At the morgue he threw a cold bluff and enlisted the assistance of an undertaker in his attempt to identify the remains. The body reposed on a slab over in a dark corner, with a white shroud wrapped around it. An eight candlepower electric light, hanging a few feet distant, shed a sickly light over it.

Jerky stood back at a reasonable distance, having a proper respect for and a normal dread of things inanimate. The undertaker drew the folds of the shroud aside and exposed the left arm to view. There was a small brown blotch on it just above the vaccination scar.

He pointed a finger at it. "Guess there's no getting around the fact that she has a mole on her arm," he observed.

"How about blue eyes?" Jerky inquired, in an uncanny tone of voice, the cold chills chasing themselves up and down his spinal column.

The undertaker raised an unresponsive lid with his thumb.

"Blue as the skies of Colorado!" he volunteered.

"And she's got blonde hair and black earbobs, hasn't she?" Jerky continued, not quite sure of what his own eyes told him.

"You said it," added the undertaker.

"That's Sis," whimpered Jerky, wiping his eyes with a grimy handkerchief, and otherwise making a bluff at emotion. "Fix her up with a respectable outfit and get her ready for a decent burial. Don't go too steep, of course. Will $200 do it?"

"Very nicely," replied the undertaker.

Jerky peeled a couple of twenty-dollar bills from a small roll and handed them over. "I'll telephone you this afternoon about final arrangements," he added, upon taking his departure.

Down in the hole under the chop suey joint Jerky made his report to Joliet Jones, who was anxiously awaiting the details.

"She tallies with your description in every respect," Jerky stated. "I looked her over mighty close, and there wasn't a point missing. The undertaker says two hundred berries will give her a respectable funeral."

"Dead sure on every point?" queried Joliet, with some uneasiness.

"My eyes is the only good thing about me!" was the lugubrious reply.

Convinced, Joliet began making preparations for the funeral. He had Jerky telephone the undertaker to have a minister at the chapel by 2 o'clock the following afternoon. Several modest floral pieces were ordered sent to the undertaking establishment, and a taxi-driver was instructed to be in waiting there at the appointed hour. The undertaker was told to secure a pretty lot in the cemetery and have the grave made ready to receive all that was mortal of the Mole.

"Now," said Joliet, addressing the gang, "you fellows spruce yourselves up and go up to the undertaker's and pull off a first-class funeral. I'll stick here till 3 o'clock and then I'll follow your machine in a taxi with the curtains drawn. I guess it will be safe for me to show my head for a few minutes at the cemetery."

In large cities one may always find newly made graves at the cemeteries, and so the funeral director experienced no difficulty in making arrangements for a burial plot in a sightly section of the city of the dead. Out of respect for the departed he had the mound of earth hidden beneath a tarpaulin, and he sent the flowers out in advance so they could be banked upon it.

All of this touched the heartstrings of Joliet, who, tho a hardened criminal, experienced a certain degree of mellowness as he followed the chief mourners into the cemetery the next afternoon. His eyes suffered moistness momentarily, for he felt keenly the loss of a sidekick who had stood by him thru thick and thin. He was surprised and uncomfortable because he was unable to pull himself together and throw off the sentimentality which possessed him.

"The Mole was nothing but my woman," he told himself, with an uncomfortable shrug of the shoulders, as the taxi in which he was riding glided slowly up the grass-bordered drive thru the cemetery. "And yet," he continued, "she was a square-shooting pal. She pulled me out of several bad pinches, and never hollered, no matter what the hardships amounted to. If it hadn't been for me having to stay under cover she'd have gone straight—always wanted a little patch of ground where she could grow marigolds and keep a few chickens. Yes, she's entitled to a decent burial, even if she did hit the crooked trail."

JOLIET'S nervous fingers toyed with a small velvet box in his coat pocket. He turned it over and over in his hand, fumbled with the clasp on it, and squirmed uneasily in his seat.

"I told her in Chicago that she should have her half of the Langdon necklace pearls," he gulped, "and by the eternal gods she shall have them, too. I'll play just as square with her as she did with me."

The hearse up ahead paused near a newly made grave. The occupants of the first taxi stepped stiffly to the ground and assisted the funeral director and the minister in placing the casket upon the supports over the grave.

With a sickly feeling gripping his inwards, Joliet stepped out of his car and approached the casket with lagging footsteps.

One hand kept turning over a velvet box in his coat pocket, with nervous fingers which were cold and sweaty. The other hand brushed an imaginary haze from in front of his eyes.

"Do any of the mourners care to have the casket opened in order to have a last look at the departed?" solemnly inquired the undertaker.

"Yes," gurgled Joliet, stepping forward. "I have a little remembrance which I would like to place in the still white hands which have finished their work here below."

The funeral director stepped to the edge of the grave, and with a screwdriver removed the long nails which held the lid in place. As he loosed the lid he turned it toward him, on its edge, so that it acted as a screen between the mourners and the body.

"Now if you will step forward," said the funeral director to Joliet.

Pulling the velvet box from his pocket, Joliet unfastened its clasp with nervous fingers. He reached in, drew forth a glistening string of pearls, shook it out at full length, and stepped forward.

With a motion as quick as a panther, the funeral director stepped aside with the casket lid, and up bobbed the body in the coffin, with an automatic revolver in each hand. It was Charley Schuler, detective!

He had the drop on the whole gang, so nobody tried to escape.

"I thought you said there was a mole

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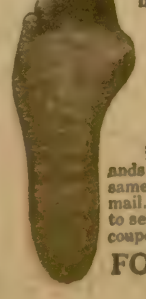

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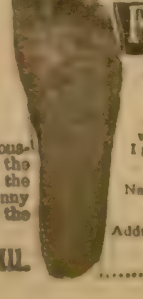

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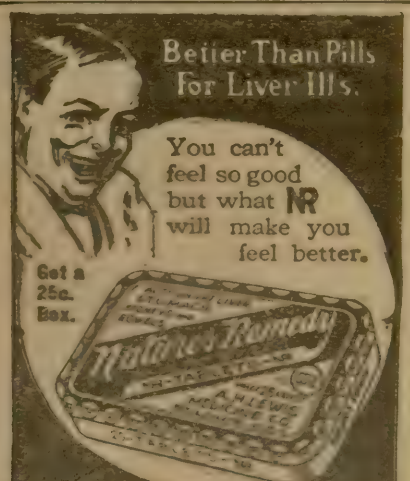

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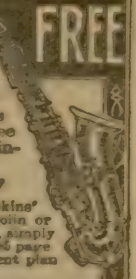

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on her arm," snarled Joliet, looking at Jerky.

"I found the Mole's type at the morgue," Schuler explained, "and I had the undertaker rig her up with earbobs and a mole to suit. Then I arranged for the little item you read in the Globe."

"Well, you're welcome to the necklace," Joliet growled, as the detective clasped the bracelets on his wrists, "but you only get the Mole's half of them."

The detective laughed as he headed his prisoners toward the taxis. "At any rate, I got you," he said, "and so far as the necklace is concerned, all I have to say is that the half is better than the hole."

Stories for Ledger Boys and Girls

The Mite-Box Money.

ONE day in early spring Winston Fowler might have been seen speeding home as fast as his legs would carry him, with terrible news. His father was superintendent of the little village Sunday school and the family lived two miles out of Monterey on a comfortable farm. Vera, Winston's sister, was just kneading the dough of her mother's week's baking when in he burst.

"Vera," he gasped, "the Bests' house was broken into last night and their silver was stolen and five dollars which was hidden in a vase."

"My goodness!" exclaimed Vera, holding up her doughy hands. "Did they catch the robber?"

"The sheriff's gone off on a clew," replied Winston, "but he is off the trail. I know because as I was coming home thru Stock's woods I saw three strangers—tough-looking fellers—sneaking up in this direction. They didn't see me. I hustled as fast as I could to warn you and dad and mummy. Where is dad? I didn't see him in the field."

"He and mummy took the car to Hartsville," said Vera. "And, Win, the mite-box money is locked up in dad's desk drawer. He meant to take it to the bank, but I guess he forgot."

"Gee!" whistled Winston. "Fifty-two dollars and eighty cents! S'pose it's stolen?"

"What shall we do?" exclaimed Vera. "There hasn't been a thief in Monterey for so long I don't believe anybody has a key. Any way, we haven't. That latch on our front door wouldn't keep a jack rabbit out."

"We must signal for help," Winston said. "Oh, I have it! The old barn. Dad was saying he wished it would catch on fire as it's an eyesore. I'll fire it. It'll bring everybody for miles around."

"But s'pose the robbers don't come after all," objected thrifty Vera. "All that good kindling would go to waste."

"I'll fix that," said her brother, and clapping his cap on he slammed out of the house.

No sooner had he gone than Vera had an idea. She ran to her father's desk with a can opener in her hand. The desk was rickety and the lock old, so it was not difficult to pry open the drawer and take out the mite-box money. Such a heap of it! All in nickels and dimes and quarters—the savings of the children. It was tied up in several little bags. Vera carried it to the kitchen.

The dough was made into four big loaves and two little ones. She opened each loaf and dividing the money hid it in the loaves. She had barely gotten her baking into the oven when the door opened and Winston came in.

"They're coming," he said, bending down by the door and arranging something. "I was just coming around the house when I saw one of them. I hadn't time to run back to the barn and fire it, but I've fixed that. See this string? It's tied to a lighted lamp set on a flower pot with straw soaked with kerosene scattered all around. I just pull the string and in a minute the barn will be on fire."

The kitchen was a large old-fashioned one with a big built-in-stove and a huge wood-box. Winston's eye fell on the box.

"Come on," he said, "let's hide."

They crouched, waiting and listening as the minutes slowly ticked by, and the delicious smell of baking bread filled the air.

"Wish they'd hurry up and come, if they're going to," muttered Winston, and he would have come out of their hiding-place if Vera had not begged him to wait.

An hour went by and Winston raised the lid cautiously and stuck out his head. Then what was his horror to find himself looking right into the face of one of the strangers he had seen before.

"Hello!" cried the astonished man. "Wot you doin' thar?"

As Vera shrank back at the sound of the rough voice, her brother sprang from the box and fastened down the lid.

"Hiding, eh?" taunted the unwelcome visitor. "Wot else you got in that box?"

Sounds coming from the other room convinced the boy that other ruffians were searching the house.

"I'll have a look in that box!" sneered the man; and shoving the boy aside he threw open the lid.

Out stepped Vera, pale but calm. She took a cloth and opened the oven and took out her crisp brown loaves, while the robber stared in astonishment.

Presently footsteps approached and from the next room two other men came. "Find anything?" asked the first stranger.

"Nope, not a trace," was the reply.

The first stranger suddenly seized Winston roughly by the collar and demanded fiercely: "Where have you hid it?"

"He doesn't know," cried Vera.

"He don't, eh?" said the man. "Well, mebbe you do."

"Mebbe," retorted Vera, her eyes flashing.

"Now, my girl," he said kindly, "maybe you'd like a reward."

"What do you take me for?" she cried.

"Oh, well," replied the robber, "we'll find it anyway. You've helped us a lot admitting it was here."

Vera turned pale as he took the bread knife and eyed her loaves. "May I?" he asked. "They look so good!"

Suddenly she noticed that the air was full of smoke. The old barn was burning.

The robber cut a thick, generous slice, and then dropped the knife. "Why, look at that!" he exclaimed and the others crowded about him.

Just then the kitchen door was pushed open and the head of a neighbor was poked in.

"We'll form a bucket brigade and save the old barn," he shouted.

"Never mind the barn!" cried Winston. "Nab these men. They're robbers."

In rushed the man, followed by others, when one of the strangers waved a paper and shouted: "Wait! Here's my search warrant. I'm a Federal officer."

"Well, what are you doing here?" demanded Winston.

"We were told that this was a moonshine place," replied the man, "and that there was a still hidden here. This girl admitted she knew where the stuff was hidden."

"Nonsense!" cried the neighbor. "This is Mr. Fowler's house and he's the Sunday school superintendent. You're on the wrong track, friend."

The man looked decidedly sheepish and so did Vera, as she explained: "I—I thought you were after the mite-box money."

At that all three men threw back their heads and laughed and just then in walked Mr. Fowler himself.

The fire burned up the old barn, but nobody cared. The sheriff caught the real robber after an exciting chase, and everybody in Monterey bought a lock or two. But if you want to make Vera real mad, just wink and say: "Mite-box money." It surely makes her sore!

The Legend of the Morning Star.

IN THE long ago time before the Indian braves lived in the forest and hunted and fished for their food, the Manitou or "spirits of the woods" made their homes among the trees and there raised their families.

On the bank of the shining Big Sea Water lived a very good Manitou and his wife and his son and daughter. Every day when the sun shone warmly the son and daughter played by the side of the Big Sea Water; played with boats of bark and with the gaily colored stones which they tossed into the water and with the flowers that grew along the bank. And every day when the dark clouds piled up and the rain came down, they played together in the wigwam; played with stones and mosses and sticks which the brother was skilful at carving.

And always as they played, they talked of the day when they should be big enough to help in the work of the world. For above all things else, the Manitou children long to help their fathers and mothers do the work that is theirs.

Finally the day came when the father stood his son up by the side of the wigwam and measured him and tested his strength and decided that at last the son was old enough to help in the work all good Manitou do. And that same day the mother gave her daughter a test of skill and strength and measured her hair and found that it was long and beautiful and announced that the daughter was now ready to do the work of a woman Manitou.

So the father and mother took their children and presented them to the King of the Manitou that he might assign to them their work.

The King of the Manitou was pleased with the appearance of the two children and praised the father and mother for their good care.

"I will give to your children," he announced quickly, "the very best work that a good Manitou may do. You, son, may be a pudwudjinnie, and keeper of the trees of the forest. Guard you well all travelers who pass your way and care for every growing thing." Then he turned to the daughter. "You, beautiful maiden, shall be honored above all Manitou. You shall be carried up into the heavens and shall brighten the dawn of day."

The brother and sister Manitou were very happy till they happened to think that their duties were so far apart—as far apart as the earth and the sky—and that probably they would never again play together.

They walked slowly back to their home by the Big Sea Water and there they sat down and talked over all the good times they had ever had. And the more they talked, the sadder and sadder they became at the thought of parting; till the sister saw that, if they were to part in happiness, they must talk of something else.

"Oh, my brother," she said with a quick smile, "think of the honor that has been done me! Never before has a Manitou been sent up to the heavens. I will live in a beautiful cloud, the color of the morning sky—are you not glad and proud for me?"

"That I am," replied the brother, "but alas! I know that just because you will live in such a beautiful cloud, you will soon forget me—your earthly brother and playmate!"

"How can you say that!" exclaimed the sister. "You know I shall always love you! And to show you that I never forget you, each morning I will smile at you just before the dawn. And I will watch you work, here among the trees and each day that your work is well done I will smile and send you my blessing just before the sun comes over the rim of the world."

So the brother was much comforted and played with his sister all that last day. Just at night fall, the four winds of the heavens carried the sister to the sky and there she has lived ever since. Her brother waited by the Big Sea Water till morning; and when he saw his sister safely shining in the sky, he set right about his own duties so that he might earn the smile she promised him.

And the little Indian boys and girls, to this day, like to get up early in the morning to see by the Morning Star's bright smile whether the little pudwudjinnie has done his day's work well.

Eskimo "Kids" Have Toys.

IN ESKIMO land little girls are as fond of playing with dolls as any other children of their sex and age. Of course, their doll babies are dressed in costumes like those of Eskimo people.

Sometimes their doll houses are snow huts in miniature, provided with tiny kettle, soapstone lamp and other essentials. The dolls are cut out of driftwood usually, this sort of task passing many an idle hour for the father of the family during the long months of the winter night.

The Eskimos are clever carvers in wood and ivory, the latter material being obtained from walrus tusks. To amuse the children, a whole Noah's Ark of animals is thus evolved, including the polar bear, the seal, the sea lion, the porpoise, the sea otter and various species of whales.

The animals are a collection quite different from that composing the familiar fauna of our own nurseries. Conspicuous among them, however, are the dog and the reindeer.

Some of the dolls turn their heads from side to side in a lifelike way by the help of a couple of strings wound about the neck and pulled by a finger passed up beneath the maniken' clothing.

Even mechanical toys are not unknown to the Eskimos. One of them has a whalebone spring, which, when released, causes an alarming looking animal to jump out of a box.

Some Dream.

THE excuses offered by schoolboys are often laughable, perhaps none more so than those of two pupils of a country school for being late. Asked why he didn't come when he heard the bell, one boy said, "Please, sir, I was dreaming I was going to California and I thought the school bell was the steamboat I was going on."

"You did, eh?" said the teacher. "And now, sir (turning to the second boy), what have you to say for yourself?"

"Please, sir, I—I was just waiting to see Tom off," stammered the other.

Jack and Jill.

JACK and Jill went up the hill,
They did not fear disaster,
For each you see had Thrift stamps three,
To help them save the faster.

Robin.

OH, LITTLE robin up in the tree,
Throw a cherry down to me?
Wish I could sing, wish I could fly,
With you, little robin, up in the sky!

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32x3½	6.90	1.90	36x4½	11.40	3.30
31x4	7.90	2.15	35x5	12.40	3.40
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THIN ICE

(Continued From Page 4)

the police, and—he shuddered at the endless chain of circumstances which might be woven about him.

He glanced at the door. There was flight. He had fled before. He might flee again. But this time the hue and cry would be fiercer, more persistent.

Suddenly a new thought riveted his eyes upon the corpse, and he knelt down and peered intently into the pale, still face. He thrust his hand into the pocket of Hamilton's coat and drew out the long, red morocco pocketbook. He opened it. There were letters, a card, a cashier's check on a Pocatello bank payable to Henry Hamilton, and fifty dollars in currency. He put them all upon the table. Then he removed the dead man's watch and hastily stripped him of his clothes. He did not pause until every vestige of apparel was removed and the body lay stark and naked upon the carpeted floor.

He hastily took off his own clothes and put them upon the dead, leaving in the pockets all the articles that would serve to identify Hamilton as Hedric Hallam. That completed, he took away one chair from the table to give it an appearance of having been occupied by but one person. Fully dressed in Hamilton's clothes, he put all of Hamilton's property in his pocket—the book, the watch, the photograph, the letters—and crushing Hamilton's soft hat upon his head he crept to the door and listened.

The house was as still as the dead upon the floor. Yet he turned the key with noiseless stealth. A quick look up and down the hallway assured him, and he stepped out of the room and softly closed the door. In a moment he was upon the street. Never, as he afterwards said, had the vaults of heaven looked so near as then when the great expanse of earth beckoned him to liberty and the distant whistle of the train called him to hasten on!

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING THE SINUOUS PATH.

THE vicinity of the station in Portland, Ore., did not have an altogether cheerful aspect. Rusty-looking buildings were strewn along the street, and after midnight sinister desolation hovered over the neighborhood. As Dr. Hallam trod the pavement looking for obscure shelter the sharp click of his heels rang irritatingly loud. After traversing several blocks he found a lodging house. Fortunately near it there was an all night drug store. He went into the latter and from a somewhat sleepy looking boy he purchased a pair of scissors. Then ascending the stairs of the lodging house he rang the night bell.

A towsled woman poked her head out of a door and in answer to his request for a room handed him the key to number ten and accepted fifty cents in exchange. Turning on the one pale light in the room he flung his hat upon the bed. Spreading a paper over the top of the dresser he took out the scissors he had purchased and clipped his whiskers close to his face. The transformation was remarkable. He appeared an entirely different man. With a whimsical smile he folded the debris in the paper and put it in his pocket. Then he compared his face with the photograph of Henry Hamilton taken three years before. The light, however, was not strong enough to afford a close examination. The stubble of beard also interfered, so he put the picture back into his pocket and went to bed.

During his short journey from Eugene to Portland unbidden thoughts formed the nucleus of a strange temptation—the ad infinitim of the psychological moment, so to speak, striving to visualize the windings of the sinuous path. Depending upon the accepted identity of the dead man at Eugene, an opportunity had appeared for the wholesale obliteration of Dr. Hedric Hallam and the criminal record which hung over him. It pointed to responsibilities shrouded in gloom and forecast with many difficulties. He did not accept the thoughts; neither did he reject them. He allowed them to simmer pending developments of the immediate past.

To escape observation he left the room early the following morning. There was nothing in the paper concerning the tragedy at Eugene—he had not expected there would be. Almost the first thing he did was to purchase new clothes and a complete change of apparel. He effected the change in the bathroom of a barbershop, from which he emerged fresh, clean shaven and handsomely debonair.

During his short stay in Portland preceding his one absent night in Eugene, he had lodged in a respectable apartment house, so, to await the outcome of events, he returned there. He was somewhat astonished that the landlady recognized him. But she did, immediately; and she complimented him on the favorable change in his appearance. She let him have the same room he had before.

"But," she said, "I forgot to ask you your name. I would like to enter it in my book."

"Do you keep a record?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, I am obliged to."

"Then put me down as Henry Hamilton."

"How long do you expect to keep the room, Mr. Hamilton?"

"Two days. Not longer than three."

Dr. Hallam was plunging recklessly into the unknown, instinctively following the thoughts seething in his brain. He did not know whether he would be in Portland a day, or a week, or a month. But he would know before morning and the present made no particular difference.

He went into his old room and closed the door. He was baggageless. All that he possessed was on his back, and there remained in his pocket after the purchase of new apparel and the payment of expenses, the exact sum of twenty-two dollars and fifteen cents. He stood in the center of the room and jingled the money.

HE WONDERED if he would have any trouble getting the Henry Hamilton check cashed at the bank in Pocatello. Unconsciously he glanced at himself in the mirror, then taking out Hamilton's photograph he studied it with contemplative care. There were two large windows in the room and the mirror being an excellent one, he made a minute comparison between the photograph and his face. There was a difference due to time as well as to training and intelligence, but the features and the general expression were sufficiently alike to mislead even the critical observer. They at least led him to believe that he could successfully pass as Henry Hamilton with Henry Hamilton's friends.

Drawing a large chair near the window he took out of his pocket the other photographs and letters and began to examine them. The writing upon the back of the girl's picture disclosed her to be 16 years of age when it was taken three years before, so she would be 19 now. He was ready to agree with Hamilton that she was "interestin' sure nuff." Her face fascinated him. He studied it from every angle and point of view, wondering who or what she was.

"Nancy Maynard," he murmured. Then he called her Nance, as Hamilton had done. He felt sure that that was the name she was commonly known by.

The picture of the senior Hamilton and his attorney, "old Tim Lyons," also received attention and scrutiny. The lawyer, he discerned, had a good, honest face. It was seamed with lines, the nose was large, the chin and mouth firm, and the face refinedly rugged. He turned to the letter he had written the scapegrace runaway. One part of it held his attention closely:

> I do not think you need have any fear of returning home, and certainly since your father's death it is your duty to do so. From the investigation which I have made, there does not appear to be any other living relative who has a claim upon the estate, and inasmuch as it has been willed to you, I am hampered in my handling of it for want of your consent concerning some matters. I sent you a draft for twelve hundred dollars a short time ago and I then confidently expected you to come home almost immediately. Instead, you go running off to some place in Oregon. I think you had better return at once, and you may be assured the old matter is dead and will not be revived. Also, your absence and complete silence during the past three years will not be referred to, and, whatever it has been, all here, I think, will consent to let it remain forever as a part of the past. Let me hear from you at once.

Dr. Hallam dropped his arm by his side with the letter dangling from his fingers. From it it clearly appeared that Hamilton had been into some scrape at Rock Springs three years before; also that with his death disappeared the only heir to the senior Hamilton's property. From a postscript he learned that Nancy Maynard was in some way connected with the trouble. The postscript went on to say that she had grown into a fine young woman, having been away two years to college, and that so far as she was concerned he thought her part in the matter would be forgotten.

Back of those three years then there was mystery and romance. Dr. Hallam wondered what was the nature of it. Hamilton had never forgotten the girl. He had even laughingly said he was going to marry her and name his first born after the doctor. Did she remember him in the same way? Had there really been love between them? He took up the girl's picture and studied it again. The face was intelligent, high-bred, refined—it was not the face of a girl who would be fascinated with the crudities of such a man as Hamilton. But that served only to infuse greater mystery into their association and he put

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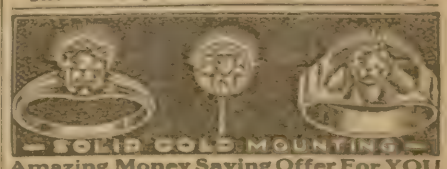

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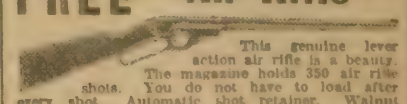

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it aside and reverted to Lyon's letter. He gathered from it that Hamilton had been as near Rock Springs as Pocatello and that for some reason he had gone away in an opposite direction. Why? To the satisfaction of the thoughts which were inadvertently influencing his conduct, he wanted to know.

Then he took up the cashier's check which Hamilton had upon him and examined that. It called for one thousand dollars. Lyons had sent twelve hundred and of the remaining two hundred Hamilton had fifty on his person when he died. The doctor viewed his new clothes and sighed. Remembering the frown upon Hamilton's face when he referred to Pocatello he thought it was because Pocatello was so near Rock Springs that one place suggested the other and the trouble he might have to face there.

THE check was dated Feb. 22, the day he had reached Portland, the day before he had been fleeced at cards—the day before he rented the room where he then sat.

His memory went back of those events and he saw himself a fugitive from Washington justice, hunted, haunted, reckless, despondent. His mood had led him to gamble, and becoming emboldened he entered one of the "near beer" saloons in the heart of the city after nightfall and there met the eminently respectable sharks who had relieved him of twenty-five hundred dollars. One of them was William Powers, a lawyer; another a real estate man, the other a merchant. He smiled grimly in recollection of his gullibility—of his eagerness to accept the invitation to go to the "Judge's" room and have a social game.

But he was not quite so green after all, the moving motive to his conduct being a desire for companionship coupled with privacy. Left to the harrowing thoughts of prison and disgrace and the torturing fear as to whether or not he had made the mistake imputed to him, he was willing to consort with any sort of being provided he could do so away from the public gaze. He would not forget that night. It was the 23rd of February, the day after Hamilton purchased the cashier's check.

He turned the check over. It had not been indorsed. Then he jingled the money in his pocket and a queer, reckless smile flitted over his lips. The cumulative second was working very hard within him as he gathered up the photographs and papers and put them back in his pocket. Lighting a cigar he stood and looked out of the window upon the throng of people passing along the street, some with umbrellas raised, others wearing cravenettes, all—men, women and children—indifferent to the fine, gossamer cloud of rain descending, charitably called an Oregon mist.

Towards the wane of day as the first shadows of approaching night came on, he heard the shrill cry of newsboys on the street. Going out he bought a paper, the first evening edition. One glance sufficed to show him that the tragedy at Eugene had not only been discovered, but that the dead man was reported to be Dr. Hedric Hallam. He hurried back into his room and read the story with avidity. It hinted at a possibility of foul play, but more directly stated that physicians were of opinion the deceased died of heart disease superinduced by excessive alcoholic stimulants. That was the truth. But as every cloud has a silver lining so every lining has its shadow, and the sheriff at Eugene stated distinctly that the deceased had nearly two hundred dollars on the morning of the day he had been killed and only a few dollars when found. He observed also the burnt ends of two cigars and pointed out that different teeth had chewed upon them—that both had not been smoked by the same man.

A later edition of the paper accelerated Dr. Hallam's movements and in some measure defined his plans. That edition carried a telegram from Chehalis, his former residence, outlining his career and reciting the fatal blunder he was alleged to have made. It also said that a warrant had been issued for his arrest, and suggested that the sheriff at Eugene and the doctors were all wrong—that Dr. Hallam had killed himself in a fit of remorse.

Dr. Hallam smiled at that and tossed the paper to one side. He felt a sense of bitterness—a disposition to blame Fate for his reverses and the tangled web of deceit into which he had been drawn. Rising from his chair he went to the mirror and viewed his countenance with cold, critical eyes. Then he slowly lifted his arm and pointed his finger at the mirrored face.

"Hallam is dead," he said fiercely. "Dead—do you understand? I will be Henry Hamilton in Henry Hamilton's home town and among everybody that ever knew Henry Hamilton. And to h—l with the consequences!"

But can one man assume another's identity? Can Hallam project himself into his double's past so utterly that the home town will accept the impostor? The story proceeds with redoubled swiftness in the next installment.

Crooked Trails and Straight

(Continued From Page 7)

"Miss Anderson, this is Mr. Flandrau. Mr. Flandrau—Miss Anderson."

Curly glanced quickly at Kate Cullison, who nodded. This then was the sweetheart of poor Mac.

Her eyes filled with tears as she took the young man's hand. To his surprise Curly found his throat choking up. He could not say a word, but she understood the unspoken sympathy. They sat together in the back of the box.

"I'd like to come and talk to you about —Mac. Can I come this evening, say?"

"Please."

Kate gave them no more time for dwelling on the past. "You did ride so splendidly," she told Curly.

"No better than Dick did," he protested.

"I didn't say any better than Dick. You both did fine."

"The judges will say you ride better. You've got first place cinched," Maloney contributed.

"Sho! Just because I cut up fancy didoes on a horse. Grandstand stunts are not riding. For straight stick-to-your-saddle work I know my boss, and his name is Dick Maloney."

"We'll know tomorrow," Laura London summed up.

As it turned out, Maloney was the better prophet. Curly won the first prize of five hundred dollars and the championship belt. Dick took second place.

Saguache, already inclined to make a hero of the young rustler, went wild over his victory. He could have been chosen mayor that day if there had been an election. To do him justice, Curly kept his head remarkably well.

"To be a human clothes pin ain't so much," he explained to Kate. "Just because a fellow can stick to the hurricane deck of a bronch without pulling leather whilst it's making a milk shake out of him don't prove that he has got any more brains or decency than the law allows. Say, ain't this a peach of a mo'ning?"

A party of young people were taking an early morning ride thru the outskirts of the little city. Kate pulled her pony to a walk and glanced across at him. He had taken off his hat to catch the breeze, and the sun was picking out the golden lights in his curly brown hair. She found herself admiring the sure poise of the head, the flat straight back, the virile strength of him.

It did not occur to her that she herself made a picture to delight the heart. The curves of her erect tiger-lithe young body were modeled by nature to perfection. Radiant with the sheer pleasure of life, happy as God's sunshine, she was a creature vividly in tune with the glad morning.

"Anyhow, I'm glad you won."

Their eyes met. A spark from his flashed deep into hers as a star falls thru the heavens on a summer night. Each looked away. After one breathless full-pulsed moment she recovered herself.

"Wouldn't it be nice if——?"

His gaze followed hers to two riders in front of them. One was Maloney, the other Myra Anderson. The sound of the girl's laughter rippled back to them on the light breeze.

Curly smiled. "Yes, that would be nice. The best I can say for her—and it's a whole lot—is that I believe she's good enough for Dick."

"And the best I can say for him is that he's good enough for her," the girl retorted promptly.

"Then let's hope——"

"I can't think of anything that would please me more."

He looked away into the burning sun on the edge of the horizon. "I can think of one thing that would please me more," he murmured.

She did not ask him what it was, nor did he volunteer an explanation. Perhaps it was from the rising sun her face had taken its swift glow of warm color.

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE ROUND UP CLUB.

A BIG game had been in progress all night at the Round Up Club. Now the garish light of day streamed thru the windows, but the electric cluster still flung down its yellow glare upon the table. Behind the players were other smaller tables littered with cigars, discarded packs, and glasses full or empty. The men were in their shirt sleeves. Big broad-shouldered fellows they were, with the marks of the outdoors hard-riding West upon them. No longer young, they were still full of the vigor and energy of unflagging strength. From bronzed faces looked steady unwinking eyes with humorous creases around the corners, hard eyes that judge a man and his claims shrewdly and with good temper. Most of them had made good in the land, and their cattle fed upon a thousand hills.

The least among them physically was Luck Cullison, yet he was their recognized leader. There was some innate quality in this man with the gray, steel-chilled eyes that marked him as first in whatever company he chose to frequent. A good friend and a good foe, men thought seriously before they opposed him. He had made himself a power in the Southwest because he was the type that goes the limit when aroused. Yet about him, too, there was the manner of a large amiability, of the easy tolerance characteristic of the West.

While Alec Flandrau shuffled and dealt, the players relaxed. Cigars were relit, drinks ordered. Conversation reverted to the ordinary topics that interested Cattleland. The price of cows, the good rains, the time of the fall roundup, were touched upon.

The door opened to let in a newcomer, a slim, graceful man much younger than the others present, and one whose costume and manner brought additional color into the picture. Flandrau, Senior, continued to shuffle without turning his head. Cullison also had his back to the door, but the man hung his broad-rimmed gray hat on the rack—beside an exactly similar one that belonged to the owner of the Circle C—and moved leisurely forward till he was within range of his vision.

"Going to prove up soon on that Del Oro claim of yours, Luck?" asked Flandrau.

He was now dealing, his eyes on the cards, so that he missed the embarrassment in the faces of those about him.

"On Thursday, the first day the law allows," Cullison answered quietly.

Flandrau chuckled. "I reckon Cass Fendrick will be some sore."

"I expect." Cullison's gaze met coolly the black, wrathful eyes of the man who had just come in.

"Sort of put a crimp in his notions when you took up the canyon draw," Flandrau surmised.

Something in the strained silence struck the dealer as unusual. He looked up, and showed a momentary confusion.

"Didn't know you were there, Cass. Looks like I put my foot in it sure that time. I ce'tainly thought you were an absentee," he apologized.

"Or you wouldn't have been talking about me," retorted Frederick acidly. The words were flung at Flandrau, but plainly they were meant as a challenge for Cullison.

A bearded man, the oldest in the party, cut in with good-natured reproof. "I shouldn't wonder, Cass, but your name is liable to be mentioned just like that of any other man."

"Didn't know you were in this, Yesler," Fendrick drawled insolently.

"Oh, well, I butted in," the other laughed easily. He pushed a stack of chips toward the center of the table. "The pot's open."

Fendrick, refused a quarrel, glared at the impassive face of Cullison, and passed to the rear room for a drink. His impudence needed fortifying, for he knew that since he had embarked in the sheep business he was not welcome at this club, that in fact certain members had suggested his name be dropped from the books. Before he returned to the poker table the drink he had ordered became three.

The game was over and accounts were being straightened. Cullison was the heavy loser. All night he had been bucking hard luck. His bluffs had been called. The others had not come in against his strong hands. On a straight flush he had drawn down the ante and nothing more. To say the least, it was exasperating. But his face had shown no anger. He had played poker too many years, was too much a sport in the thoro-going frontier fashion, to wince when the luck broke badly for him.

The settlement showed that the owner of the Circle C was twenty-five hundred dollars behind the game. He owed

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Mackenzie twelve hundred, Flandrau four hundred and three hundred to Yesler.

With Fendrick sitting in an easy chair just across the room, he found it a little difficult to say what otherwise would have been a matter of course.

"My bank's busted just now, boys. Have to ask you to let it stand for a few days. Say, till the end of the week."

Fendrick laughed behind the paper he was pretending to read. He knew quite well that Luck's word was as good as his bond, but he chose to suggest a doubt.

"Maybe you'll explain the joke to us, Cass," the owner of the Circle C said very quietly.

"Oh, I was just laughing at the things I see, Luck," returned the younger man with airy offense, his eyes on the printed sheet.

"Meaning for instance?"

"Just human nature. Any law against laughing?"

Cullison turned his back on him. "See you on Thursday if that's soon enough, boys."

"All the time you want, Luck. Let mine go till after the roundup if you'd rather," Mackenzie suggested.

"Thursday suits me."

Cullison rose and stretched. He had impressed his strong, dominant personality upon his clothes, from the high-heeled boots to the very wrinkles in the corduroy coat he was now putting on. He had enemies, a good many of them, but his friends were legion.

"Don't hurry yourself."

"Oh, I'll rustle the money, all right. Coming down to the hotel?" Luck was reaching for his hat, but turned toward his friends as he spoke.

Without looking again at Fendrick, he led the way to the street.

The young man left alone cursed softly to himself, and ordered another drink. He knew he was overdoing it, but the meeting with Cullison had annoyed him exceedingly. The men had never been friends, and of late years they had been leaders of hostile camps. Both of them could be overbearing, and there was scarcely a week but their interests overlapped. Luck was capable of great generosity, but he could be obstinate as the rock of Gibraltar when he chose. There had been differences about the ownership of calves, about straying cattle, about political matters.

Finally had come open hostility. Cass leased from the forestry department the land upon which Cullison's cattle had always run free of expense. Upon this he had put sheep, a thing in itself of great injury to the cattle interests. The stockmen had all been banded together in opposition to the forestry administration of the new regime, and Luck regarded Fendrick's action as treachery to the common cause.

He struck back hard. In Arizona the open range is valuable only so long as the water holes also are common property or a private supply available. The Circle C cattle and those of Fendrick came down from the range to the Del Oro to water at a point where the canyon walls opened to a spreading valley. This bit of meadow Luck homesteaded and fenced on the north side, thus cutting the cattle of his enemy from the river.

Cass was furious. He promptly tore down the fence to let his cattle and sheep thru. Cullison rebuilt it, put up a shack at a point which commanded the approach, and set a guard upon it day and night. Open warfare had ensued, and one of the sheepherders had been beaten because he persisted in crossing the dead line.

Now Cullison was going to put the legal seal on the matter by making final proof on his homestead. Cass knew that if he did so it would practically put him out of business. He would be at the mercy of his foe, who would ruin him if he pleased. Luck would be in a position to dictate terms absolutely.

Nor did it make his defeat any more palatable to Cass that he had brought it on himself by his bad-tempered unneighborliness and by his over-reaching disposition. A hundred times he had blacknamed himself for an arrant fool because he had not anticipated the move of his enemy and homesteaded on his own account.

He felt that there must be some way out of the trap if he could only find it. Whenever the thought of eating humble pie to Luck came to his mind, the rage boiled in him. He swore he would not do it. Better a hundred times to see the thing out to a fighting finish.

Taking the broad-rimmed gray hat he found on the rack, Cass passed out of the clubhouse and into the sun-bathed street.

CHAPTER XII.

LUCK MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

CULLISON and his friends proceeded down Papago street to the old plaza where their hotel was located. Their transit was an interrupted one, for these four cattlemen were among the best known in the Southwest. All along the route they scattered nods of recognition, friendly greetings, and genial banter. One of them—the man who had formerly been the hard-riding, quick-shooting sheriff of the county—met also scowls once or twice, to which he was entirely indifferent.

Luck had no slavish respect for law, had indeed, if rumor were true, run a wild and stormy course in his youth. But his reign as sheriff had been a terror to lawbreakers. He had made enemies, desperate and unscrupulous ones, who had sworn to wipe him from among the living, and one of these he was now to meet for the first time since the man had stood handcuffed before him, livid with fury, and had sworn to cut his heart out at the earliest chance.

It was in the lobby of the hotel that Cullison came plump against Lute Blackwell. For just a moment they stared at each other before the former sheriff spoke.

"Out again, eh, Blackwell?" he said easily.

From the blooshot eyes one could have told at a glance the man had been drinking heavily. From whisky he had imbibed a Dutch courage just bold enough to be dangerous.

"Yes, I'm out—and back again, just as I promised, Mr. Sheriff," he threatened.

The cattleman ignored his manner. "Then I'll give you a piece of advice gratis. Papago County has grown away from the old days. It has got past the two-gun man. He's gone to join the antelope and the painted Indian. You'll do well to remember that."

The fellow leaned forward, sneering so that his ugly mouth looked like a crooked gash. "How about the one-gun man, Mr. Sheriff?"

"He doesn't last long, now."

"Doesn't he?"

The man's rage boiled over. But Luck was far and away the quicker of the two. His left hand shot forward and gripped the rising wrist, his right caught the hairy throat and tightened on it. He shook the convict as if he had been a child, and flung him, black in the face, against the wall, and he hung, strangling and sputtering.

"I—I'll get you yet," the ruffian panted. But he did not again attempt to reach for the weapon in his hip pocket.

"You talk too much with your mouth."

With superb contempt, Luck slapped him, turned on his heel, and moved away, regardless of the raw, stark lust to kill that was searing this man's elemental brain.

Across the convict's rage came a vision. He saw a camp far up in the Rincons, and seated around a fire five men at breakfast, all of them armed. Upon them had come one man suddenly. He had dominated the situation quietly, had made one disarm the others, had handcuffed the one he wanted and taken him from his friends thru a hostile country where any hour he might be shot from ambush. Moreover, he had traveled with his prisoner two days, always cheerful and matter of fact, not at all uneasy as to what might lie behind the washes or the rocks they passed. Finally he had brought his man safely to Casa Grande, from whence he had gone over the road to the penitentiary. Blackwell had been the captured man, and he held a deep respect for the prowess of the officer who had taken him. The sheer pluck of the adventure had alone made it possible. For such an unflawed nerve Blackwell knew his jerky rage was no match.

The paroled convict recovered his breath and slunk out of the hotel.

Billie Mackenzie, owner of the Fiddleback ranch, laughed even while he disapproved. "Some day, Luck, you'll get yours when you are throwing chances at a coyote like this. You'll guess your man wrong, or he'll be one glass drunker than you figure on, and then he'll plug you thru and thru."

"The man that takes chances lives longest, Mac," his friend replied, dismissing the subject carelessly. "I'm going to tuck away about three hours of sleep. So long." And with a nod he was gone to his room.

"All the same Luck's too derned rash," Flandrau commented. "He'll run into trouble good and hard one of these days. When I'm in Rattlesnake Gulch I don't aim to pick posies too unobservant."

Mackenzie looked worried. No man lived whom he admired so much as Luck Cullison. "And he hadn't ought to be sitting in these big games. He's hard up. Owes a good bit here and there. Always was a spender. First thing he'll have to sell the Circle C to square things. He'll pay us this week like he said he would. That's dead sure. He'd die before he'd fall down on it, now Fendrick has got his back up. But I swear I don't know where he'll raise the price. Money is so tight right now."

THAT afternoon Luck called at every bank in Saguache. All of the bankers knew him and were friendly to him, but in spite of their personal regard they could do nothing for him.

"It's this stringency, Luck," Jordan of the Cattlemen's National explained to him. "We can't let a dollar go even on the best security. You know I'd like to let you have it, but it wouldn't be right to the bank. We've got to keep our reserve up. Why, I'm lying awake nights trying to figure out a way to call in more of our money."

"I'm not asking much, Jack."

"Luck, I'd let you have it if I dared. Why, we're running close to the wind. Public confidence is a mighty ticklish thing. If I didn't have twenty thousand coming from El Paso on the Flyer tonight I'd be uneasy for the bank."

"Twenty thousand on the Flyer. I reckon you ship by express, don't you?"

"Yes. Don't mention it to any one. That twenty thousand would come handy to a good many people in this country these times."

"It would come right handy to me," Luck laughed ruefully. "I need every cent of it. After the beef round-up, I'll be on Easy street, but it's going to be hard sledding to keep going till then."

"You'll make a turn somehow. It will work out. Maybe when money isn't so tight I'll be able to do something for you."

Luck returned to the hotel morosely, and tried to figure a way out of his difficulties. He was not going to be beaten. He never had accepted defeat, even in the early days when he had sometimes taken a lawless short cut to what he wanted. By God, he would not lose out after all these years of fighting. It had been his desperate need of money that had made him sit in last night's poker game. But he had succeeded only in making a bad situation worse. He knew his debts by heart, but he jotted them down on the back of an envelope and added them again.

Mortgage on ranch (due Oct. 1)..	$13,000
Note to First National.....	3,500
Note to Reynolds	1,750
I O U to Mackenzie.....	1,200
Same to Flandrau.....	400
Same to Yesler.....	300
Total	$20,150

Twenty thousand was the sum he needed, and mighty badly, too. Absentmindedly, he turned the envelope over and jotted down one or two other things. Twenty thousand dollars! Just the sum Jordan had coming to the bank on the Flyer. Subconsciously, Luck's fingers gave expression to his thoughts. $20,000. Half a dozen times then pencilled it, and just below the figures, "W. & S. Ex. Co." Finally they wrote automatically the one word, "Tonight."

Luck looked at what he had written laughed grimly, and tore the envelope in two. He threw the pieces in the waste paper basket.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN INITIALED HAT.

MACKENZIE was reading the Sentinel while he ate a late breakfast. He had it propped against the water bottle, so that it need not interfere with the transportation of sausages, fried potatoes, hot cakes, and coffee to their common desination.

Trying to do two things at once has its disadvantages. A startling headline caught his eyes just as the cup was at his lips. Hot coffee, precipitately swallowed, scalded his tongue and throat. He set down the cup, swore mildly, and gave his attention to the news that had excited him. The reporter had run the story to a column, but the leading paragraphs gave the gist of it:

While the citizens of Saguache were peacefully sleeping last night, a lone bandit held up the messengers of the Western and Southern Express Company, and relieved them of $20,000 just received from El Paso on the Flyer.

Perry Hayley, the local manager of the company, together with Len Rogers, the armed guard, had just returned from the depot, where the money had been turned over to them and receipted for. Hawley had unlocked the door of the office and had stepped in, followed by Rogers, when a masked desperado appeared suddenly out of the darkness, disarmed the guard and manager, took the money, passed thru the door and locked it after him, and vanished as silently as he had come. Before leaving, he warned his victims that the place would be covered for ten minutes and at any attempt to call

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for help they would be shot. Notwithstanding this, the imprisoned men risked their lives by raising the alarm.

Further down the page Mackenzie discovered that the desperado was still at large, but that Sheriff Bolt expected shortly to lay hands on him.

"I'll bet a dollar Nick Bolt didn't make any such claim to the reporter. He ain't the kind that brags," Mackenzie told himself.

He folded the paper and returned to his room to make preparation to return to his ranch. The buzz of the telephone called him to the receiver. The voice of Cullison reached him.

"That you, Mac. I'll be right up. No, don't come down. I'd rather see you alone."

The owner of the Circle C. came right to business. "I've made a raise, Mac, and while I've got it I'm going to skin off what's coming to you."

He had taken a big roll of bills from his pocket, and was counting off what he had lost to his friend. The latter noticed that it all seemed to be in twenties.

"Twelve hundred. That squares us, Mac."

The Scotchman was vaguely uneasy without a definite reason for his anxiety. Only last night Cullison had told him not a single bank in town would advance him a dollar. Now he had money in plenty. Where had he got it?

"No hurry at all, Luck. Pay when you're good and ready."

"That's now."

"Because I'll only put it in the Cattlemen's National. It's yours if you need it."

"I'll let you know if I do," his friend nodded.

Mackenzie's eye fell on a copy of the Sentinel protruding from the other's pocket. "Read about the hold-up of the W. & S. Express? That fellow had his nerve with him."

"Sho! This hold-up game's the easiest yet. He got the drop on them, and there was nothing to it. The key was still in the lock of the door. Well, when he gets thru he steps out, turns the key, and rides away."

"How did he know there was money coming in last night?"

"There's always a leak about things of that sort. Somebody talks. I knew it myself for that matter."

"You knew! Who told you?"

"That's a secret, Mac. Come to think of it, I wish you wouldn't tell anybody that I knew. I don't want to get the man who told me in trouble."

"Sure I won't." He passed to another phase of the subject. "The Sentinel says Bolt expects to catch the robber. Think he will?"

"Not if the fellow knows his business. Bolt has nothing to go on. He has the whole Southwest to pick from. For all he knows, it was you."

"Yes, but——"

"Or more likely me." The gray eyes of the former sheriff held a frosty smile.

In spite of that smile, or perhaps because of it, Mackenzie felt again that flash of doubt. "What's the use of talking foolishness, Luck? Course you didn't do it. Anybody would know that. Man, I whiles wonder at you," he protested, relapsing into his native tongue as he sometimes did when excited.

"I didn't say I did it. I said I might have done it."

"Oh, well! You didn't. I know you too well."

BUT the trouble was Mackenzie did not know him well enough. Cullison was hard up, close to the wall. How far would he go to save himself? Thirty years before when they had been wild young lads these two had hunted their fun together. Luck had always been the leader, had always been ready for any daredeviltry that came to his mind. He had been the kind to go the limit in whatever he undertook, to play it to a finish in spite of opposition. And what a man is he must be to the end. In his slow, troubled fashion, Mac wondered if his old side partner's streak of lawlessness would take him as far as a hold-up. Of course it would not, he assured himself; but he could not get the ridiculous notion out of his head. It drew his thoughts, and at last his steps toward the express office where the hold-up had taken place.

He opened a futile conversation with Hawley, while Len Rogers, the guard who had not made good, looked at him with a persistent, hostile eye.

"Hard luck," the cattleman condoled.

"That's what you think, is it? You and your friends, too, I reckon."

Mackenzie looked at the guard, who was plainly sore in every humiliated crevice of his brain. "I ain't speaking for my friends, Len, but for myself," he said amiably.

Rogers laughed harshly. "Didn't know but what you might be speaking for one of your friends."

"They all can speak for themselves when they have got anything to say."

Hawley sent a swift, warning look toward his subordinate. The latter came to time sulkily. "I didn't say they couldn't."

Mackenzie drifted from this unfriendly atmosphere to the courthouse. He found Sheriff Bolt in his office. It was that official's busy day, but he found time not only to see the owner of the Fiddleback, but to press upon him cordially an invitation to sit down and smoke. The Scotchman wanted to discuss the robbery, but was shy about attacking the subject. While he boggled at it, Bolt was off on another tack.

Inside of a quarter of an hour the sheriff had found out all he wanted to know about the poker game, Cullison's financial difficulties, and the news that Luck had liquidated his poker debt since breakfast time. He had turned the simple cattleman's thoughts inside out, was aware of the doubt Billie had scarcely admitted to himself, and knew all he did except the one point Luck had asked him not to mention. Moreover, he had talked so casually that his visitor had no suspicion of what he was driving at.

Mackenzie attempted a little sleuthing of his own. "This hold-up fellow kind of slipped one over on you last night, Bolt."

"Maybe so, and maybe not."

"Got a clew, have you?"

"Oh, yes—yes." The sheriff looked straight at him. "I've a notion his initials are L. C."

Billie felt himself flushing. "What makes you think that, Nick?"

Bolt walked to a cupboard and unlocked it. His back was toward the cattleman, but the latter could see him take something from a shelf. Turning quickly, the sheriff tossed a hat upon the table.

"Ever see this before?"

Mac picked it up. His fingers were not quite steady, for a great dread drenched his heart like a rush of icy water. Upon that gray felt hat with the pinched crown was stamped the individuality—and the initials—of Luke Cullison.

"Don't know as I recognize it," he lied, not very readily. "Not to know it. Why?"

"Thought perhaps you might know it. The hold-up dropped it while getting away."

Mackenzie's eyes flinched. "Dropped it. How was that?"

"A man happened to come along San Miguel street just as the robber swung to his horse. He heard the cries of the men inside, guessed what was doing, and exchanged shots with the miscreant. He shot this hat off the fellow's head."

"The Sentinel didn't tell any such story."

"I didn't give that detail to the editor."

"Who was the man that shot the robber?"

"Cass Fendick."

"But he didn't claim to recognize the hold-up?" Mackenzie forced himself to ask this in spite of his fears.

"Not for certain."

"Then he—he had a guess."

"Yes, Mac. He guessed a man whose initials are the same as those in that hat."

"Who do you mean, Nick?"

"I don't need to tell you that. You know who."

"If you mean Luck Cullison, it's a d——d lie," exploded the cattleman. He was furious with himself, for he felt now that he had been unsuspectingly helping to sertify the suspicions of the sheriff. Like an idiot, he had let out much that told heavily against his friend.

"I hope so."

"CASS FENDRICK is not on good terms with him. We all know that. Luck has got him in a hole. I wouldn't put it a bit above Cass to lie if he thought it would hurt Luck. Tell you it's a d——d conspiracy. Man, can't you see that?"

"What about this hat, with the two holes shot thru the rim?"

"Sho! We all wear hats just like that. Look at mine!" Billie held it out eagerly. "Has yours an L. C. stamped in the sweat band?" Bolt asked with a smile.

"I know you ain't his friend, Nick. But you want to be fair to him even if he did oppose your election." Mackenzie laid an appealing hand on the knee of the man seated opposite him.

"I'm sheriff of Papago Country. It doesn't make any difference who worked for or against me, Billie. I was elected, and I'm going to enforce the law."

"And you think Luck would do a fool thing like this?"

"I didn't say I thought so, but it's my business not to overlook any bets."

"But you do believe it. Now, don't you?"

"Since you've got to have an answer—yes, I do."

"By heaven, I'd as lief think I did it myself."

"You're a good friend," Bolt conceded. "By the way, I've got to pay for some supplies this morning. Can you cash a check for a hundred?"

"I reckon so." Mackenzie drew from his pocket the roll Cullison had given him two hours before. He peeled five twenties from it. The sheriff observed that the prevailing denomination was the same.

"Get these from Luck?" he asked carelessly.

The cattleman stared at him, and the suspicion grew on him that he had been trapped again.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because it happens the bills stolen from the W. & S. were all twenties."

"No, I didn't get them from Cullison. This is money I had," he answered sullenly.

"Then I dare say you can let me see the money you got from him."

"He paid me by check."

"Banked it yet?"

"That's my business, Nick."

"And mine, Billie. I can find out from the bank if you have. Besides, I happen to know that Luck's bank account is overdrawn."

"Some one has been at you to prejudice you, Bolt."

"Nobody but Luck Cullison himself—and his actions."

From the office of the sheriff, Mackenzie wandered to the club in search of Luck. He was thoroly dispirited, both dreaded to meet Luck, and let was anxious to do so. For he wanted to warn him, wanted to see him fall into one of his chill rages when he told him there were suspicions against him.

Cullison had left the club, but Alec Flandrau was still there. Billie drew him into a corner, and learned that Luck had just settled with him.

"Any one see him give it to you, Alec?"

"No. He took me upstairs to the library and paid me."

"In bills?"

"Yes—in twenties."

"For God's sake, don't tell anybody that." In a dozen jerky sentences the owner of the Fiddleback told Flandrau of the suspicions of the sheriff.

Together they went in search of Luck. But, tho they looked for him all day, he was not to be found. They might have concluded he had ridden out to the ranch, but his horse was still at the stable where he had left it.

The last that had been seen of him Luck was walking along the plaza toward the hotel, not a hundred and fifty yards from the latter. A dozen men had spoken to him in the distance of a block. But he had not been seen to reach his hotel. He had not called for

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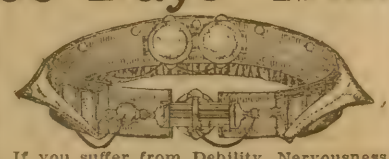

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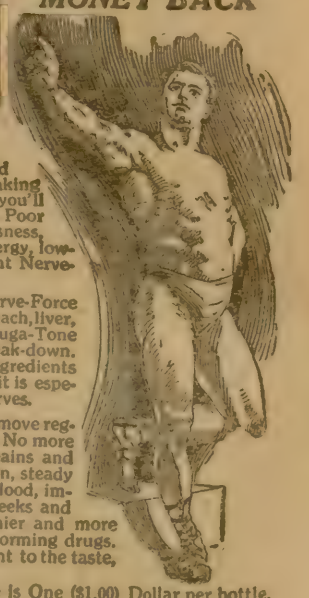

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his room key. Somehow he had vanished, and none could tell how or where.

To Bolt his disappearance was as good as a confession of guilt. He searched Luck's room at the hotel. Among other things, he found an old envelope with interesting data penciled on it.

Before nightfall the word was whispered all over Saguache that Luck Cullison, pioneer cattleman and former sheriff, was suspected of the W. & S. Express robbery and had fled to save himself from arrest. At first men marveled that one so well known and so popular, one who had been so prominent in affairs, could be suspected of such a crime, but as they listened to the evidence and saw it fall like blocks of a building into place, the conviction grew that he was the masked bandit wanted by the sheriff.

Was the famous fighting sheriff the mysterious masked bandit? Had he belied the belief of all of his friends and committed the W. & S. Express robbery? Read the next installment to find out whether Luck Cullison is guilty.

Mildred Takes the Wheel

"WANT to take the wheel now?" asked the young man as he turned into the south drive of the Midway.

Oh," demurred the young woman, I'm afraid I might break something."

"The idea!" contradicted the young man. "You can't break anything when I'm right here telling you what to do. I'll draw up to the curb so you can slide over into my seat while I run around to your side.

"Now, remember," he continued after they had exchanged places, "when you shift gears 'reverse' is opposite from 'first;' second is over that way, and 'third' is back here."

"I remember," declared the young woman, "only I'm not sure which is the clutch and which is the brake."

"I drive so automatically I can't tell which is which without mental strain—let's see—your right foot rests on the accelerator unless you need it on its neighbor, the brake, so the farthest pedal is the clutch. You must never let your foot ride the clutch, unless you have thrown it all the way out, remember."

"That's the craziest thing—the way a clutch is 'out' when you are really pushing it 'in,' pondered the young woman. 'Oh, Walter, I'm afraid! I never can get all this machinery thru my head. I've forgotten how you said to start it."

"Like this," demonstrated the young man, setting the gas and spark, pulling out the ignition button, stepping on the starter and turning the choke. "You want to leave this choke on 'cold' if it's a hot day, and on 'hot' if it's cold."

"More of those awful paradoxes!" exclaimed the young woman, with her feet flat on the floor board, her hands on the wheel, her eyes on the pulsing hood. "The engine's going and I'm jiggling the wheel. Why doesn't it start moving?"

"You haven't thrown it in gear," explained the young man with beautiful patience. "Now, throw out your clutch—always remember to have your clutch out before shifting, or you'll strip the gears. All right, put her over this way into 'first;' now let your foot come back."

"It's moving! Oh, what shall I do?"

"Of course it's moving. Just let it go and note where you are going. Don't let it get over to the middle of the street that way. Keep on the right. Now you've got enough speed to shift to 'second.' Throw out your clutch. I'll shift for you. Now give her a little more gas. All right; now we'll put her into 'third.' Throw out your clutch."

"Isn't this wonderful!" beamed the young woman. "We're going fifteen, sixteen, eighteen——"

"Better not watch the speedometer," cautioned the young man. "You need to concentrate on the road. Some day you'll be able to look around at the scenery and nod to friends passing by and talk to folks on the back seat and readjust a hairpin, but at first——"

"Here comes a car—it's going to cross our path—what shall I do?"

"You have the right of way—go on. Keep right ahead till we hit Jackson park; then take the drive around by the statue of the republic to the bathing beach and then south."

"But there's the Stony Island car track," objected the young woman. What shall I do if a car is coming?"

"You have the right of way, so go ahead. That's fine, the way you curved to go under that viaduct. Honk your horn!"

"I've forgotten where the horn is."

"Here it is in the center of the steering wheel," said the young man, reaching over and pressing the black knob of the hooter. "You must give 'em a little horn when people start crossing in front of you. If you should hit any one you know how you'd feel."

"Take this wheel, Walter!" commanded the young woman. "Tell me how to stop! I'm afraid I'll hit somebody. I never could sleep another wink if I hurt anybody. Oh, I don't know which thing you do to stop."

"Hold out your arm for signal—pull over to the extreme right—throw out your clutch—shift into 'neutral'—put on your brake—press off the ignition. There! How was that?"

"Wonderful!" breathed the young woman as the machine came to a silent halt.

"Do you know why I bought this car, Miriam?" The young man seemed suddenly moved by the young, green foliage of the park.

"Why?"

"Because I thought it would be lots better than a silly little string of pearls—the usual gift of—of the groom, you know. I want you to be a corking good driver. You are everything else already."

* * *

The Stuff That Soothes.

"HAIL to the vote getting cup of tea!" said the man whose wife had been a delegate to the suffrage convention.

"Whaddye mean, 'vote getting'?" growled the man who lamented the advent of prohibition. "You mean goat getting."

"It used to be that a candidate who was a good mixer with the byes corralled all the votes," said the husband of the suffragist. "He'd line his constituents up at the corner bar and say, 'Fellow citizens, I'm Lucius Josephus Hinklestine, candidate for dog tax commissioner o' this fair an' thriving city. Have a drink on me.'

"Whereat the bunch lined up, grabbed the tall ones firmly in their determined paws and yelled, 'Three cheers for our illustrious leader!' Then they drank up.

"The mere mention of tea would 'a' killed him for life with the noble electorate. The sight of him hobnobbing with a woman's club president would have tagged him, 'express prepaid,' and sent him to the political boneyard.

"That's all finished. Nowadays the Hon. Hiram Who Izy, candidate for President, or Governor, or most any other office you want to name, calls his advisers together to plan for the forthcoming campaign. Does he figure out the cost of beer and cigars and other forms of bribery? Not this year.

"'Bill,' says he, 'I think we'd better have a pretty swell set o' women's headquarters this year. Let's place em' in the Bunk Hotel. Enamel 'em in old gold and gray—nice and subdued and restful.'

"The quarters are fitted up. Hiram gives them the careful onceover, says there are not quite enough mirrors in the room for his present constituents to powder their noses at, and hunts up a woman's campaign manager. Her business is to stage as many pink teas as possible for the women voters. Hiram, of course, is in attendance. He drinks gallons of the stuff that soothes, pretends he likes it, and crooks his little finger as he grabs the cup, just the way the pictures show in the fashion magazines. In between, he converses on dress reform, the bringing up of babies and such things. In place of the stein, comes the tea cup. So I say, 'Hail to the new vote getter.'"

"Maybe," said the man who lamented the advent of prohibition. "But it'll never, never, never get mine!"

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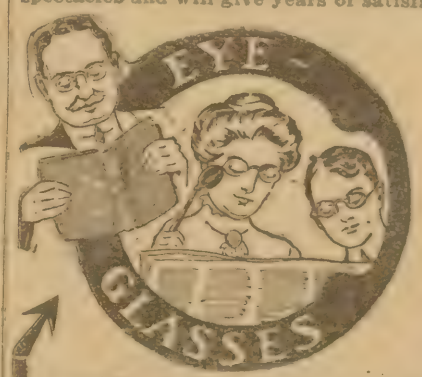

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DEEP WATER DAN

By Ernest A. Phillips

"ONE stoker!" yelled Bob Standish, shipping master of the Carrier's Hall at Duluth. "One stoker!" Standish planted his elbows firmly on top of the counter and dropped his sharp-pointed chin into the cups of his hands. With deep set eyes he gazed out among the motley tribe of seamen inside the hall, listening to their seemingly senseless jabber and chatter; and no one paid any attention to his request for a fireman. The sailors jabbered and laughed on as tho Standish were a million miles away. This aggravated him to great extents. He was in the habit of having silence reign supreme once his commanding voice had shrilled out the wants of a vessel.

"Here! When I yell for a stoker I want one, git me? You loggerheads snap out of it an' git on the job. I want one stoker! One stoker!"

His sharp, decisive tone brought immediate silence, and all eyes left their cards and turned upon the shipping master.

"What tub is it, Bob?" asked a tall, slender, sallow-cheeked individual; and the question was sufficient to inform all concerned that the speaker wasn't thoroly educated to the ways of the Great Lakes shipping halls.

"Who'n th' hell wants to know 'er name?" demanded Standish, glaring fiercely out into the crowd. "Who said that?"

"I did, old top," laughed the slender one promptly. "What about it?"

A single glance at him told Standish that he was an old salt, and that perhaps he was taking his first fling at Great Lake sailing. His rolling strides and his every movement smacked of deep water seamanship.

"You're off the blue deep, eh?" sneered Standish, eyeing the other somewhat closely; and envying the broad shoulders and long, rangy, brawny arms that showed massive strength and power at their command.

"Yeh, what of it?" retorted Dan Guthrie, known up and down the Atlantic seaboard as "Deep Water" Dan. "What of it? Can't a guy ask the name of a tub he's intendin' to ship on up here on these frog ponds?"

To have his beloved Great Lakes called mere frog ponds caused the anger within Standish's veins to surge and boil viciously. It was one piece of slander that any lake sailor absolutely refuses to stand for. Standish's countenance turned pale white, and the whiteness was that which, on some faces, denotes uncontrollable anger.

BUT at thought of the ship needing a stoker, the shipping master smiled knowingly at what he knew, and said: 'All right, Steve, I'll tell you her name—the James E. Davidson, an' you're the very man I want to ship on her, too. Wanna take her down to Buffalo?"

"You said it, bo," replied Deep Water Dan, stepping toward the desk and reaching into his ragged coat pocket for his shipping book. "Give her to me so's I kin git down where the old salt water ain't so far from me timid nose. I ain't 'zactly stuck on these fresh water ponds."

And while Deep Water Dan signed the necessary articles and received the credentials from Standish that would allow him to pass thru the militia guarding the big ore docks, a smothered snicker penetrated the atmosphere; as to those who were familiar with the Great Lake ships, the James E. Davidson was one craft they weren't overly anxious to establish business relations with. Not that she was a hard steamer or a bum feeder, but because her skipper, known to lake seamen as Fightin' McKeever, was an old deep water man himself; and in addition, a skipper who allowed no one to walk on the port side of his ship. Save when at the dock and when deck work was absolutely necessary did Fightin' McKeever allow any one to lounge around on the port side. And to be caught smoking a cigarette on that particular side of the James E. Davidson was simply an open invitation to a scrap with Captain McKeever, and he was one man who formed a specialty of bouncing down out of the pilothouse and crashing blow after blow upon the unsuspecting victim without giving the slightest warning of approach.

And this is what Deep Water Dan innocently stepped into by shipping on the James E. Davidson. Leaving the shipping hall, he wandered out toward the Messaba docks where lay the steamer, and up the long, dangling Jacobs' ladder he climbed, his bag across his shoulder—and once on the main deck, Deep Water Dan made the fatal mistake of dropping his bag on the starboard side and walking across in front of the blackened coal bunkers to the port side, unconcerned and unaware as to what would befall him.

Once he thought he heard a muffled, warning caution from some one behind, again he thought he knew that some one was endeavoring to warn him against something; but just when he thought he knew he ceased to know—and sagged limply and lifelessly at the knees, only to crumple and fall to the main deck, his head resting against a timber head. For be it known that Fightin' McKeever had been standing on the port side, gazing listlessly across to the opposite dock when Deep Water Dan invited trouble by walking leisurely toward him; and a stiff, smashing right cross, followed by a short, inhuman left uppercut, proved to be the necessary passports to place Deep Water Dan in slumberland.

"The sooner you landlubbers learn to stay on your own side of my ship the better it'll be for you," snarled Captain McKeever, kicking the limp form and motioning the mate to get two deck hands and drag it over to where it belonged. "Take 'im over there where he belongs, an' tell him what happened when he wakes up." And with a smile of achievement, Fightin' McKeever stepped back to his former position, placed his arms across the taffrail and gazed off toward the opposite docks.

IT WAS down in the fantail where Deep Water Dan woke up; and as he rolled slowly over in his bunk, he sleepily rubbed his eyes, and a queer, mysterious feeling overcame him. He wondered what had happened, and when.

"I tried to tell you of it," said an unknown voice.

Deep Water Dan gazed at the speaker in awe, a frown of bewilderment inscribed across his corrugated forehead.

"Tell me? About what?" he managed to ask, pulling himself up into a sitting position.

"About Fightin' McKeever," replied the other. "I didn't think you knowed about it an'——"

"About what?" demanded the victim, unable to solve it all out.

"Why, that skipper don't allow no one to get over on the port side an' his one happy moment is to git one of us birds over there an' then hammer hell out'n us—like he did you."

Then it flashed thru Dan's mind; and he realized what had happened. And, too, he also remembered of some old salt having told him of the same experience some years ago. It appeared as tho this shipmate had given the Lakes a whirl, and like Deep Water Dan, the James E. Davidson was the first fresh water craft he landed. Dan smiled wanly, and defiantly and determinedly. That revenge gleamed in his steely eyes was plainly evident.

"Yeh, an' that ain't all about this skipper, either," went on the fireman who had just come off watch. "He's the d—dest capt'n I ever did hear of. If a feller only makes a half trip with 'im he raves like a hippo with the bellyache an' if a feller don't ride this old tub all summer he cusses an' swears to beat the very devil, an' a feller has to keep his eyes peeled all the time."

Deep Water Dan smiled thoughtfully to himself.

"Glad you tipped me off, bo. I'm goin' to git off when she ties up at Buffalo an'—well, some time later in the summer I'm goin' to ship on one of these here frog pond tubs and take for meself a heluva good wallopin' outta one of these here hard boiled skippers. Git me? There ain't no gink goin' to git anything on old Deep Water Dan. Not on your tintype, bo."

Twenty-four hours later the James E. Davidson, laden with eleven thousand tons of iron ore, and with her hatches battened down, whistled for the tugs and was towed out thru the channel, under the hanging bridge, and turned her nose toward the Soo locks, down bound.

ONCE in the boiling, raging waters of Lake Superior, the big 600-foot craft gradually fell into the roll and commenced heaving and plunging and swerving in the manner well known to those who have sailed the lakes. On occasion extraordinary large seas would catch her under the prow and lift her up to towering heights, only to break suddenly and let the flat bottom smash against the water with a deafening smack; and such times as these would make stoking nothing short of a hell on earth. With doors swinging and with the bunkers filled with water, Deep Water Dan stuck to his task and kept the gauge singing around the 210-pound mark watch in and watch out.

Down the course across Lake Superior the big freighter plunged, thirty-six hours later passing White Fish Point and entering the famous Soo River, thence into the largest set of fresh water locks in the world at the little town of Sault Ste. Marie. On down into Lake Huron did the big vessel steam, again running into a heavy sea, and rolling all the way into Port Huron, where the St. Claire River was met. Thence into Lake St. Claire did she poke her massive bow, finally passing Belle Isle and Detroit; then down thru the Livingston Channel and into Lake Erie for the final splash into the Buffalo C. H. & D docks.

When the big freighter had tied up at the docks in Buffalo, Deep Water Dan told the chief engineer he was leaving her, and after getting his book from the chief he wandered up the starboard side toward the skipper's cabin. A knock at the door brought Captain McKeever forth.

"I'm gittin' off, Capt'n, an' I want my pay, sir."

"Gittin' off are you," scoffed the skipper. "Just like all these narrow-minded, soft-skulled hoosiers, ain't you?"

Deep Water Dan flushed slightly under the cutting remarks, and within his veins there existed a powerful desire to plant his huge, massive fists against the skipper's jaw; but upon second thought he remembered what he had in mind, and merely said, somewhat tantalizingly: "I hardly git the idea of a skipper passin' remarks about the aft gang."

"Use 'sir' when you speak to me, savvy?" snorted the irate captain.

"Sir," sneered Deep Water Dan, a savage, gruelling gaze flashing into his deep inset eyes of steely blue. "Sir, then, sir."

Captain McKeever left him standing at the door and seated himself at the desk. A moment later he handed Deep Water Dan his check, and was on the verge of taking a clout at him as was his custom with those who made but a half trip or a single revolution on the James E. Davidson—but Deep Water Dan was prepared for any such moves, and left the cabin unharmed.

"Be d——d glad when I can get a crew that'll ride with me all season," grumbled Captain McKeever between his curiously twisted lips. And Deep Water Dan was dismissed from his thoughts, and a chuckle came forth as the skipper remembered how he had sent the big brute into dreamland up in Duluth. "He's yellow, that stiff. "Yellow as paint ever dreamed of being."

IT WAS late in September when the steamer James E. Davidson tied up at the Conneaut docks, only to have three deck hands and two stokers quit her. Captain McKeever roared as usual, and with a glint of determination in his savage eyes he went ashore and entered the Conneaut shipping hall.

"Say, Ford," he almost shouted, addressing the shipping master, "for the love of Mike ship me some hands that'll stick, will you? This gang of tramps I've been getting won't stay only a half trip or a round trip at the most."

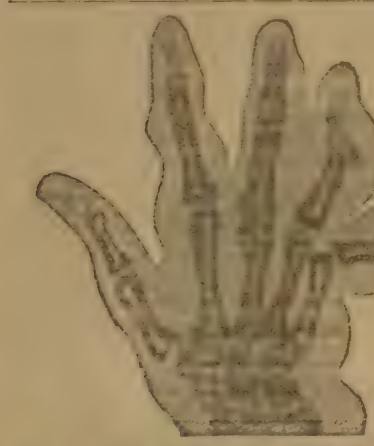
Master Ford elevated his brows and frowned indifferently.

"Can't blame 'em much, Cap'n, the way you treat 'em. I'd get off too, if you tried any of that old bunco game on me. Well, I'll see what I can do for you. Got an old man here in the hall who's been waiting to get out deckin'. Mebbe he'll tie you up this winter Mac."

"Which is he?" asked the skipper, anxious to get one who would stick till navigation closed.

"Oh, you, Pete!" called the shipping master. "Come here."

"That the guy?" asked McKeever,



NEW TREATMENT THAT KNOCKS RHEUMATISM

75c BOX FREE TO ANY SUFFERER

Up in Syracuse, N. Y., a treatment for rheumatism has been found that hundreds of users say is a wonder, reporting cases that seem little short of miraculous. Just a few treatments even in the very worst cases seem to accomplish wonders even after other remedies have failed entirely. It seems to neutralize the uric acid and lime salt deposits in the blood, driving all the poisonous clogging waste from the system. Soreness, pain, stiffness, swelling just seem to melt away and vanish.

The treatment first introduced by Mr. Delano is so good that its owner wants everybody that suffers from rheumatism or who has a friend so afflicted, to get a free 75c package from him to prove just what it will do in every case before a penny is spent. Mr. Delano says: "To prove that the Delano treatment will positively overcome rheumatism, no matter how severe, stubborn or long standing the case, and even after all other treatments have failed, I will, if you have never previously used the treatment, send you a full size 75c package free if you will just cut out this notice and send it with your name and address with 19c to help pay postage and distribution expense to me personally." W. H. Delano, 96 D Wood Bldg., Syracuse, N. Y. I can send only one Free Package to an address.

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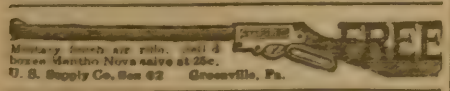

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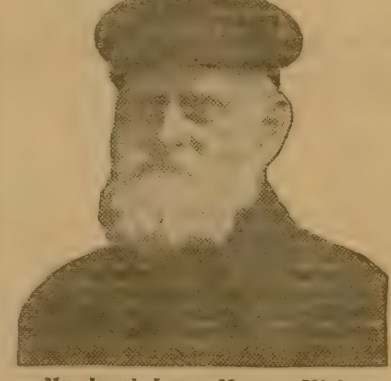
Cured His Piles

Now 88 Years Old But Works At Trade of Blacksmith and Feels Younger Since Piles Are Gone.

The oldest active blacksmith in Michigan is still pounding his anvil in the town of Homer—thanks to my internal method of treating piles.



Mr. Jacob Lyon, Homer, Mich.

I wish that you could hear him tell of his many experiences with ointments, salves, dilators, etc., before he tried my method. Here is a letter just received from him:

Mr. E. R. Page, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir: I want you to know what your treatment has done for me. I had suffered with piles for many years and used suppositories and all kinds of treatments, but never got relief until I tried yours. Am now completely cured. Although I am 88 years old, and the oldest active blacksmith in Michigan, I feel years younger since the piles have left me. I will surely recommend it to all I know who suffer this way. You can use my letter any way you wish and I hope it will lead others to try this wonderful remedy.

Yours truly,
J. L. LYON.

There are thousands of afflicted people suffering with piles who have never yet tried the one sensible way of treating them.

Don't be cut. Don't waste money on foolish salves, ointments, dilators, etc., but send today for a Free Trial of my internal method for the healing of Piles.

No matter whether your case is of long standing or recent development—whether it is occasional or permanent—you should send for this free trial treatment.

No matter where you live—no matter what your age or occupation—if you are troubled with piles, my method will relieve you promptly.

This liberal offer of free treatment is too important for you to neglect a single day. Write now. Send no money. Simply mail the coupon—but do this now—TODAY.

FREE PILE REMEDY

E. R. Page,
382H Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.
Please send free trial of your Method to:

.....

.....

.....

watching the aged and bent individual slowly approach them.

"Uh-huh. Old, but he'll stick. Said he had to get some kale so he could make Hot Springs this winter an' boil out. Got rheumatics or cooties or somethin' like that."

"Give 'im to me, Ford—and two others. D——n the firemen, let the chief get them!" And Fightin' McKeever rambled down out of the hall and back to his craft, which was already under the big, gigantic electric huelets and well under way with her unloading.

Old Dad, as the crew named the aged deckeroo, proved to be a "comical cuss," and he soon made friends with the deck crew, which was composed mostly of college and high school youngsters out picking up enough to complete their education. In the forecastle old Dad would spin yarn after yarn of the old days at sea, telling of his thousand and one thrilling adventures; and as he would unravel those yarns, it appeared as tho a certain, distinguished glint of anxiety would shine in his deep set eyes; but this was unnoticed by the for'd crew.

The following midnight found the big hull of the freighter devoid of cargo, and she turned her proud nose toward the upper lakes and started back toward Duluth for another chunk of iron ore; and as he craftily coiled up the Manila lines down in the forepeak, after the tugs had been turned loose, the old deck hand smiled in supreme satisfaction to himself.

IT WAS noon the next day when the Livingstone Channel was reached; and noon found old Dad sitting lazily on a timber head back aft on the starboard. Up the narrow channel the big craft leisurely steamed, issuing passing signals to down bound crafts as it entered the Detroit River.

Upon steaming slowly past the ship yards, old Dad shifted his gaze and subconsciously looked up toward the poop deck. He saw Captain McKeever leaning across the railing, giving instructions to the first mate.

Fifteen minutes later the telephone from the pilot's house to the engine-room called for checked speed till the mail boat had been picked up; and it was here that old Dad forgot himself and strolled absent-mindedly over to the port side of the ship, gazing blankly toward the shore and, apparently, not seeing Fightin' McKeever dashing down from the poop deck toward the companionway leading to the main deck.

It wasn't until the skipper reached the main deck that old Dad realized where he was at—and in an instant his hair bristled as does that of a cat's tail when a dog comes too near, and old Dad was in fighting humor.

What followed is simple to relate.

Old Dad planted his feet firmly and stanchly, and met the raving skipper with two vicious swings, one of which thudded against his jaw and the other against his long pointed nose. There followed two streams of red and a pile driving smash to the groin—and Fightin' McKeever was dead to the world, whipped to a frazzle and stretched out across the deck in a manner he was not accustomed to.

Like a flash, old Dad, seeing that his job was complete in every detail, hurdled over the railing and dived into the river, immediately starting shoreward with long, graceful strokes that mark an efficient swimmer.

Once ashore, he entered a barber shop and had his massive beard shaved, his hair cut, and following that came a bath and a visit to a three ball clothing store. The individual emerging from the second-hand store a scant hour later would have if examined authoritatively and closely, proved to be none other than Deep Water Dan.

"No, sir, there ain't no gink goin' to git anything on old Deep Water Dan. Not on your tintype," said he, smilingly, gazing down toward the river and considering his revenge thoroly complete. "Now 'tis me back for the old salt. These frog ponds isn't no place for a dyed-in-the-wool sailor."

* * *

The Quick Way.

THE village painter was painting the inside walls of the church and was getting on remarkably well with the work, his brush keeping time to a lively jazz tune which he was whistling. The vicar walked in and exclaimed: "John, you should not whistle in church."

"I can work better while whistling, sir," said John.

"Then whistle a hymn tune," said the vicar.

"Very well, sir," replied John, and commenced whistling that well-known tune, "The Old Hundredth," very slowly, his brush also keeping time.

The vicar hastily went up to him and said: "Whistle the other tune, John, or else the painting will never be done."

* * *

The Shifting Years.

WAITER—"What was your order, sir? I'm sorry to say I have forgotten it."

Diner—"I gave it so long ago I don't remember, but I'll change it, for it would be out of season now, anyway."

They Came From Billings Avenue

"OF COURSE," said the tired lady with her hat askew over one eye and grime on her carefully manicured hands, "this flat isn't as nice in many respects as our old one, but it has many advantages in all sorts of ways. When I get the furniture sorted out and the curtains up——"

"It's going to be fine," agreed her husband, who had entered carrying the bird cage, which had been left at mother's during the migration. "I feel as tho I had reached peace and plenty at last. After what we went thru with the Harparkers——"

"To say nothing of those Blankpoints underneath us!" chimed in his wife, sitting down to talk it over. "I hope never in my life to have people like the Harparkers in a flat overhead and Blankpoints underneath. Music box rattle and fox trotting till 2 in the morning! Why, if those Harparkers had one party a month they had fifteen. On his salary I don't see how they did it. And the way their little boy was allowed to pound with the hammer! I always expected the plastering to descend and as for taking a nap, right in my own apartment that we paid rent for, it wasn't to be done, absolutely. A boiler factory invariably started up over my head. You can't imagine how thankful I shall be to live where I can have a little quiet."

"It'll be fine when I want to sleep Sunday mornings," agreed her husband. "They gave that kid two hammers on Sunday and encouraged his exercise. And maybe now our grocery bills won't be so big with the Blankpoints off the premises. They were the prize borrowers. If it had been only sugar, flour and butter—but I rebelled at my safety razor."

"That isn't anything," mourned his wife. "Why, that woman wore out my filet lace tea napkins borrowing them for her parties and I never had a hairpin to my name or a net. But when they borrowed our large oriental rug the time they entertained out of town company at dinner, and the north side Thomsons called on us and we sat on a bare floor——"

"Did they ever return that peck of potatoes?"

"Certainly not," answered the wife. "And they didn't return forty-seven cups of sugar and pounds of tea and tho I tried to conceal my pickled peaches that woman nosed them out and was always running up with a glass dish breathless because she didn't have a relish fit to set before the Befoozelums or whoever had come unexpectedly and promising to bestow upon me some real maple sirup when it came. But I guess that sirup was lost on its way. Yes, I certainly thank my stars that I am rid of the Blankpoints! Why, we can go to California, maybe, on what we save."

"Moving is fierce, but I'm glad we did it," said her husband, untangling some clinging excelsior from his ankles. "To be sure, I expect I shall find my dress suit laid carefully across the side of bacon and the ham and probably my shoes are inside the piano, but I don't care. Listen to this quiet! This must be an especially well built building with lots of deadening in the floors. There isn't a sound above or below us, Angeline!"

"They are probably very nice people who live here," his wife remarked. "They know how to behave and have some consideration for others. It certainly is a relief to be here in spite of the larger living-room in the old flat and that kitchen pantry. However, I never had much to put in the pantry, owing to the constant drain on my possessions by Mrs. Blankpoint, so I can put up with this."

"And cigars!" gloomed her husband, stretching out his tired legs and surveying the heaped up furniture. "I guess, all told, Blankpoint borrowed several thousand smokes from me, which he never paid back except in stogies. To think I won't have to hide cigars in the hall closet any more! Well, come on, let's go out somewhere and stir up some dinner. Oh, you happy home!"

As they locked their front door the smiling agent passed thru the hall.

"I'm just altering the names in the letter boxes," he told them genially. "Didn't you say you came from Billings avenue? Maybe you know the people who are moving in above and below you tomorrow. They lived on Billings, too—Blankpoint and Harparkers? If you do, it'll be nice—my heavens, man, she's fainted!"

* * *

The Hidden Face.

"HELLO! Is this Mr. Jigson?"

"Yes."

"This is Smith. Can I borrow your auto for this afternoon?"

"Why, no. I shouldn't think you'd have the face to ask for it."

"I haven't. That's why I'm asking over the phone."

How a Woman's Future Health and Appearance May Depend Upon the Condition of Her Blood Today

How Anaemia Saps the Iron from the Blood, Robs the Body of Strength and Vitality and Often Unfits Women for the Cares of Home, Social or Business Life.

Physician says Nuxated Iron Helps Make Rich Red Blood

—The kind that puts strength in the nerves, roses in the cheeks and helps keep the body supple, active and tingling with energy.

A woman's appearance may be completely changed, her physical strength broken down and her hopes of future health and happiness utterly shattered simply because she is not awake to the condition of her blood, is the opinion of Dr. Ferdinand King, New York Physician and Medical Author.

"Time and again," he continued, "women patients come to me and say: 'Doctor, I don't know what is the matter with me—I'm always tired out, nervous, and I'm beginning to look awfully old. I don't know what to do.' In practically nine out of ten cases, one of the real and true causes of their weak, tired, nervous conditions may be simply lack of sufficient iron in the blood. Almost invariably in these cases I prescribe organic iron—Nuxated Iron—to enrich the blood and create thousands of new red blood cells, thereby quickly transforming the flabby, toneless flesh into firm healthy tissue.

"Plenty of the right kind of iron in the blood, in my opinion, will make the American woman, the sane, healthy, beautiful, happy creature she sometimes is and always ought to be. I have known Nuxated Iron to give women greatly increased strength and energy in two weeks' time and make them look years younger."

In commenting upon Dr. King's statement concerning the imperative need of more iron in the blood of run-down, nervous women, Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, says: "Many a woman, who is run-down, easily tired out, nervous and irritable, suffers from iron deficiency and does not know it. I am convinced that there are thousands of such women who, simply by taking Nuxated Iron might readily build up their red corpuscles, increase physical energy and get themselves into condition to ward off the millions of disease germs that are almost continually around us. In my opinion Nuxated Iron by enriching the blood, strengthens the nerves, builds up physical power and helps make weak, nervous, run-down women keen, active and tingling with energy."

Manufacturers' Note: Nuxated Iron, which is recommended above is not a secret remedy but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. Each tablet of genuine Nuxated Iron is stamped as follows and the words Nuxated Iron are stamped into each bottle, so that the public may not be led into accepting inferior substitutes. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

This woman is gazing into a crystal seeking to know her future

If the crystal could show the actual condition of this woman's blood today, it might reveal either of the two pictures the artist has shown above.

If her blood is becoming thin, weak, pale and watery her bright hopes for the future may be utterly shattered by the curse of anaemia—lack of iron.

But if she is keeping her blood rich, red and pure, filled with plenty of strength-giving iron, she is paving the way for a lifetime of radiant health and happiness.

It lies within the power of thousands of women of today to determine to a great extent what their own futures may be.

If you feel your strength waning, if you tire easily, are nervous and irritable or look pale, haggard and worn, you owe it to yourself to find out if your blood is starving for want of iron.

Administration of simple Nuxated Iron often increases the strength and endurance of weak, delicate, run-down women in two weeks' time.

HOT OFF THE JOKESMITH'S ANVIL

A Truthful Answer.

She—"George, dear, why do you always go out on the porch when I begin to sing? Does it make you sad?"

He—"Not exactly that, dear, but I couldn't bear the neighb rs to accuse me of wife-beating."

Not Forceful Enough.

A garrulous lawyer was arguing a case. He had rambled on in such a desultory way that it became very difficult to follow his train of thought and the judge had yawned ominously.

Whereupon the long-winded lawyer, with a trace of sarcasm, said:

"I hope, your honor, I am not unduly trespassing upon the time of the court."

"My friend," observed the judge, "there is a considerable difference between trespassing on time and encroaching on eternity."

Standing Room Only.

As any reporter will tell you, the only place in a newspaper office where real toil is done is the city room. Imagine our pleasure when we overheard one of the office boys saying:

"When I first came here I thought it was called the 'sitting-room.' I said something about the sitting-room one day to the city editor, and I thought he was going to throw me down the elevator shaft."

One of the Mob.

"This picture," said Mr. Gawker.

"Was painted in a garret," replied the proud owner.

"Well! Well!"

"A hundred thousand wouldn't buy it now."

"No?" said Mr. Gawker, eying the masterpiece more closely. "And I'm one of the hundred thousand."

Habit.

"How did it happen?" they asked the scrambled motorist, as they picked him and the girl up from the roadside and tried to remove the tree from the brand new flivver, which had only recently superseded the family horse and buggy.

"Well," groaned the victim, "I was—er—busy, so I just gave her the lines and let her find her way home."

Made No Difference.

Man—"What are you fishing for, little boy?"

Boy—"Sharks!"

Man—"But there are no sharks in that little pond."

Boy—"No—nor nothing else, so I might just as well fish for sharks."

School.

Professor—"Why was that period in history called the dark ages?"

Freshman—"Because there were so many knights then."

TO AN URN.

Who fingered your smooth curves?
Some ancient priest of yore?
As from your mouth the incense swerv'd
Toward yonder temple door—
Who shaped your curved base?
Who kindled your first fire?
Who polished your green face?
Who gently plucked the lyre?
Ah, mystery is about your birth,
—A deep and Oriental stealth,
—You probably first came to this earth
—In some factory in Perth Amboy, N. J.

Less Embarrassment.

"Well," said Farmer Contossel, "I'm glad the railroads have gone back to private ownership."

"What difference does it make to you?"

"I can speak my mind to the station agent without feelin' that mebbe I'll be criticised for showin' lack of respeck to a Government official."

On the Spot.

"I just called, madam, to say—h'm—how sorry I was to hear you had lost your husband. H'm—h'm. But we all have to tread the same path. M'm, haw. And—h'm, h'm—I was wondering if the house is to let?"

Took Dangerous Chance.

HE LOOKED a sorry sight as he limped into the insurance office. Bandages were numerous, and he walked with the aid of a crutch.

"I have called to make application for the amount due on my accident policy," he said. "I fell down a long flight of stairs the other evening, and sustained damages that will disable me for some time to come."

The manager gave him a firm look.

"Young man," he replied, "I have investigated your case, and find that you are not entitled to anything. It could not be called an accident, for you certainly knew that the young lady's father was at home."

Could Use Recipe.

When the prisoner had been duly fined for cruelty to his wife he was asked to go to the magistrate's private room. There he found that great man waiting.

"Look here," said the latter, "your wife in her evidence just now said you had her completely terrorized."

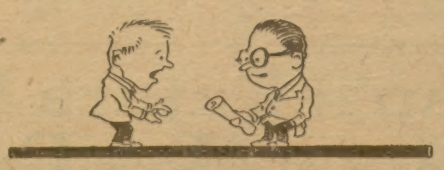
"She did, sir," agreed the man; "but——"

"Now, look here! I am not speaking to you in my official capacity, but as man to man. You understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, how did you do it?"

Cause.



Assistant—"What's the director so mad about?"

Scenario Editor—"I gave him a scenario which is so good that he cannot improve upon it."

THE TYRANT.

Who rules the house and all within?
Who often needs a safety pin?
Who makes you glad he's not a twin?
The baby!

Who is a pwecious 'ittle dear?
Whose little ways are often queer?
Who moves old bachelors to sneer
The baby!

Who wakes at night and 'ants a jink?
Whose rosy-posy toes are pink?
Who from the bottle doesn't shrink?
The baby!

Who wakes at 4 a. m. to yowl?
Who when you lift him starts to howl?
Who looks as wise as any owl?
The baby!

Who can upset your every plan?
Who plainly shows he knows he can?
Who some day'll be a horrid man?
The baby!

The Human Barometer.

A salesman was showing an elderly lady the virtues of the car he sells. He made many turns and at the proper times extended his arm as a turning signal.

The old lady watched the proceedings for some time. Then she craned her neck and looked at the sky.

"Mister," she said sternly, tapping him on the shoulder, "you just tend to your driving. It don't look like rain nohow, but if it should I'll let you know."

Almost the Real Thing.

Lady Sunshine Spreader (to cell inmate)—"Remember, my poor fellow, 'stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.'

Number 117732—"No, mum, but a ten-year stretch of 'em'll whatcher might call create the atmosphere."

Misdirected.

"I'm afraid that boy of ours lacks concentration."

"Oh, he has concentration enough, only instead of using it on the work he has to do he concentrates upon how to escape doing it."

Underpaid.

"It doesn't seem quite fair."

"What doesn't?"

"This motion picture comedian gets $1,000 a week and his dog, who does all the work and creates most of the laughs, gets only two or three bones a day."

Educational.

"You say this is an educational film?"

"Yes," replied the movie magnate blandly.

"But it features a 'vampire.'"

"Exactly. We're trying to make the world safe for married men."

Brain Teasers.

State Abbreviations.

296—Write the abbreviations of seven States, one under the other so that their final letters spell "Liberty."

Beheadings.

297—1. Behead to span the water and leave a mountain peak.
2. Behead something conventional and good and leave the spoken word.
3. Behead disloyalty to one's country and leave sanity.
4. Behead something of little importance and leave a firearm.
5. Behead a receptacle for water and leave something that is not smooth.
6. Behead a part of a rose tree and leave an instrument for making a noise.
7. Behead a sailing vessel and leave a part of the body.
8. Behead a pleased look and leave a great distance.
9. Behead to kill and leave the sound of merriment.

Diamond.

298—My first is in Sun.
My second is a call to attract attention.
My third is a winter flower.
My fourth we remember with honor on Memorial Day.
My fifth is an assumed name.
My sixth is an affirmation.

Four Word Square.

299—1. The repetition of a sound.
2. To load or weigh anything.
3. To utter a cry of distress.
4. A side glance.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

292. Beheadings.

S—lash
H—eel
A—way
L—ark
L—ever
O—at
W—on

293. Eight "Citys."

1. Ferocity. 2. Paucity. 3. Scarcity. 4. Velocity. 5. Audacity. 6. Perspicacity. 7. Pertinacity. 8. Atrocity.

294. Curtailings.

Charm—char; demure—demur; paint—pain; mope—mop; pawn—paw; paste—past; rank—ran; shine—shin.

295. Word Square.

Star
Tape
Apes
Rest

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are printed simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

Very Plain.

The Man—"This is quite a book. Believe me, the author calls a spade a spade."

The Girl (interested)—"Really? I must read it. What is it about?"

The Man—"A book on farm implements."

His Evident Impression.

"Hey, there, Sorrel-top!" called an impatient customer in the rapid restaurant. "Gimme two over, stack o' wheats, cuppa java, and git a hump on ya! See?"

"Sa-a-a-ay!" coldly returned Charmian, the waitress, "Whadda ya think this is, anyhow—yer birthday?"

Financial Rating.

"Why do you flourish money so ostentatiously?" asked the friendly guest.

"I'm going to order a porterhouse steak," replied the host. "I don't want to wait for the hotel to make inquiries to see whether I am able to afford it."

Tempted Fate.

"What became of that girl Masherton was flirting with last summer?"

"You mean the girl that Masherton thought he was flirting with? She married him."

Touching Thoughtfulness.

Dasher—"This parcel post package is being delivered in unusually quick time. How do you account for it?"

Mail Carrier—"The department thought it contained a time bomb, sir."

False Charge.

"You are charged with non-support of your wife? What have you to say for yourself?"

"Well, jedge, I done got her three more washings a week than any other cullud lady in de block."

ADDRESSED TO A STEEL STENOG.

You never are late in the morning.
You never get restless at four,
And I've never known you to giggle or chew;
You never use slang, what is more.

Your costume is simple and quiet,
Your color is always the same;
And I'm seldom impelled by the words you've misspelled
To heaps maledicks on your name.

Yet I feel that there's something I'm missing;
My life seems peculiarly bare,
In spite of the fact that your every act
Is performed without fixing your hair.

For I've found that your soul is a motor,
Your motives are amperes and volts;
Your memory's wax, if you drop it in cracks,
And your posture's dependent on bolts.

So I think I'll recall Miss McPippen
To sit at the desk on my right.
Her eyes are quite blue . . . . And I think I'll hand you
To the clerk she went out with last night!

Born to It.

"That feller at the next table is a lucky guy," observed Uncle Timseed, indicating a heavy, two-handed feeder who was filling his mouth with mashed potatoes and peas, using his knife for a trowel. "He came into money from both sides o' the family an' got all kinds of it."

"Yes," assented his city nephew, "he certainly looks as tho he had been born with a gold knife in his mouth."

No Time to Lose.

"John, there's talk of putting tobacco out of business."

"Nothing to it."

"That's what you said about liquor."

"Well, what do you want me to do?"

"Hurry up and get enough coupons for that pink plush sofa."

Research.

"Well, Tommy, did you learn anything at school today?" asked the proud father.

"Yes, dad," replied the youngster with pugilistic ambitions.

"Fine! What was it? History, geography, grammar——?"

"No, dad. I learned that Sam Snoggs, the butcher's son, packs an awful punch in his right."

Costly.

Young Man—"I should like to ask your advice, sir, as to whether you think your daughter would make me a suitable wife?"

Lawyer—"No; I don't think she would. Ten dollars, please."

H. C. OF LIVING AGAIN!

There was a young fellow from Ga.,
Who said to his girl, "I have ba.
I'd ask you, I vow,
To marry me now,
But I'm sorry—I cannot afa."

Agreeable.

Motorist (arrested for speeding)—"A fine morning, isn't it, Judge?"

Judge—"It is. Ten dollars, to be exact."

Slightly Nervous.

Reckless Driver—"Hear them cylinders knockin'?"

Timid Passenger—"It's not the cylinders, it's my knees."

Mrs. Newlywed (giving first order to butcher over phone)—"Please send me a pound of steak."

Butcher—"And what else, please?"

Mrs. N.—"And—and some gravy."

Proof.

GEORGE, the elderly waiter, entered the office of the famous solicitor who usually lunched at his table in a certain restaurant and asked to see the chief.

"Well, George," asked the man of law, when the waiter was shown in, "what can I do for you? In trouble?"

"No, sir, not exactly that; but I've got a chance of a good job at the Hotel Splendide, and I was wondering if you'd be so kind as to write me a testimonial, saying I'm a good waiter, and honest, and so forth, sir?"

"Well, George, of course I know you're a good waiter, but I don't know anything else about you. How do I know, for example, that you're honest?"

"Oh, well, I am, sir! You'll be quite safe in saying that."

"Very good. I'll write it, then."

"Thank you very much indeed, sir! And if at any time you come to the Splendide and want a good lunch or dinner, be sure to come to my tables and I'll make you out a bill at half price."

* * *

Where the Fault Lay.

AS THE Irish police recruit strolled along on his first turn of night duty, loud yells of "Fire!" rent the air. He bolted quickly to the spot and found a house well alight, with a man half hanging out of an upstairs window.

"Help! Help!" he yelled. "If I jump will you catch me?"

"Sure; an' Oi will!" replied the policeman readily.

So the man jumped, only to crash to the ground and lie there stunned. When, a few minutes later, he recovered consciousness, he looked up at the constable reproachfully, and murmured feebly:

"I thought you said you could catch me?"

"Begorrah!" replied the Irishman, "Oi was only waiting for yez to bounce an' Oi'd have had yez."

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Information—The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 35 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

SALESMEN WANTED

WATER STILLS MADE ENTIRELY OF copper, one or three gallon capacity; prices $25.00 and $40.00, respectively. Shipped prepaid by express or parcel post the same day we receive your order. Ideal for distilling water for automobile batteries, industrial uses, and drinking purposes. Charles Jarl, 1703 Leavenworth St., Omaha, Nebr.

SALESMEN—CITY OR TRAVELING. Experience unnecessary. Send for list of lines and full particulars. Prepare in spare time to earn the big salaries—$2,500 to $10,000 a year. Employment services rendered members. National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. 103G, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS WANTED

BIGGEST MONEY-MAKER IN AMERICA. I want 100 men and women quick to take orders for raincoats, raincapes and waterproof aprons. Thousands of orders waiting for you. $2.00 an hour for spare time. McDonough made $813.00 in one month. Nissen $18.00 in three hours. Purviance $207.00 in seven days. $5,000 a year profit for eight average orders a day. No delivering or collecting. Beautiful coat free. No experience or capital required. Write quick for information. Comer Manufacturing Co., Dept. B-157, Dayton, Ohio.

TAILORING AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY county to take orders for tailor-made clothes. This is strictly an agency offer to men who can sell ten or more suits a season. We will ship you free of charge our large attractive fall and winter sample outfit, containing 200 samples and fashions. We can use foremen salesmen, press shops and barbers. Write today and become our exclusive agent in your territory. Jay Rose & Co., 411-415 S. Wells St., Chicago.

SELL WHAT MILLIONS WANT. NEW, wonderful Liberty portraits—Creates tremendous interest—Absolutely different—Unique. Enormous demand—30 hours' service. Liberal credit. Outfit and catalogue free. $100 weekly profit easy. Consolidated Portrait Co., Dept. 12, 1936 W. Adams St., Chicago.

AGENTS—$100 WEEKLY. AUTOMOBILE owners everywhere wild with enthusiasm. Marvelous invention doubles power, mileage, efficiency. Saves its cost first day. Sensational sales everywhere. Territory going like wildfire. $25 sample outfit and Ford car free. Write quick. Ovee Co., Dept. 7, Louisville, Ky.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISH- ing everything; men and women, $30.00 to $100.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories" anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free. Z. Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

THE PROSPEROUS AGENT IS A DAVIS agent. Line up for the big rush—$40-$60 weekly. "Lucky 11" and our 27 other varities cut store price one-third-one-half. Worth 150% to 200% for you. Davis Products Co., Dept. 609, Chicago.

AGENTS: $60 A WEEK TAKING ORDERS for guaranteed shoes for men, women and children. Must give satisfaction or replaced free. Brand new proposition. Write quick for territory and samples. Thomas Shoe Co., 3611 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

FINE FINISHED ENLARGED CONVEX bust portraits, framed complete with oval glass and imt. circassian walnut frame, boxed all $3.50. Crescent Portrait Studio, 1340 Belmont Ave., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS agents to sell hosiery, underwear, shirts, dresses, skirts, waists, shoes, clothing, etc. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 503 Broadway, New York.

SELL INSYDE TYRES, GENUINE INNER armor for auto tires; double mileage; prevents punctures and blowouts; tremendous demand. American Accessories Company, Dept. 126, Cincinnati, Ohio.

BIG PROFITS SELLING JUBILEE SPARK intensifiers to automobile owners, garages. Banishes spark plug trouble. Saves gas. Exclusive territory. Jubilee Mfg. Co., 120 Sta. C., Omaha, Nebr.

WILLIAMS COCOANUT OIL SHAMPOO sells for 50c, costs 10c. Fastest seller on the market. Entire country has the craze for it. Gold mine for agents. W. B. Williams, Dept. 24, Montclair, N. J.

MAKE AND SELL YOUR OWN GOODS. Formulas by expert chemists. Manufacturing processes and trade secrets. Write for formula catalog. Wayne Mystic Company, Washington, D. C.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS—OUR SOAP AND TOILET AR- ticle plan is a wonder. Get our free sample case offer. Ho-Ro-Co., 125 Locust, St. Louis.

HANDLE PERMANENT INK, 600% PROFIT, sample postpaid upon receipt of 10c. Territory going fast. Write today. Adam & Co., 226 River St., Chicago.

AGENTS, KOMIK WINDOW CARDS JUST out, selling fast, big profits, write quick. Komik Advertising Co., 112 South 5th St., Cambridge, Ohio.

AGENTS MAKE $25 SATURDAY SELLING Master Spark Intensifiers. Sample and particulars, 35c. Middlesex Auto Products Co., 426 South Putnam Bldg., Davenport, Iowa.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR— Soaps, extracts, perfumes, toilet goods. Experience unnecessary. Carnation Co., 26 S. Main, St. Louis.

MONEY MADE QUICKLY WITH OUR goods. Home Mfg. Co., Dept. 14, New Albany, Ind.

HELP WANTED

WANTED—MEN—WOMEN, OVER 17. Hundreds railway mail clerks. Examinations everywhere July 14. $1,300-$2,150. Vacancy list free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. W 29, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

EARN BIG PAY DOING CLERICAL HOME work. Write Chautauqua Business Builders, Jamestown, N. Y.

MALE HELP WANTED

RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTORS WANT- ed; earn from $110 to $200 per month and expenses. Short hours; travel; three months' home study under guarantee. We get you position. No age limit. Ask for booklet C. M. 12. Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

DETECTIVES EARN BIG MONEY. TRAVEL. Great demand. We train you. Particulars free. Write American Detective System, 1968 Broadway, New York.

MEN—AGE 17 TO 45. EXPERIENCE UN- necessary. Travel; make secret investigations, report. Salaries; expenses. American-Foreign Detective Agency, 126, St. Louis.

MEN WANTED. BECOME AUTO EXPERTS. $45 week. Learn while earning. Write Franklin Institute, Dept. W. 804, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200, colored porters by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 656 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

BE A DETECTIVE, $50-$100 WEEKLY; travel over world; experience unnecessary. American Detective Agency, 300 Lucas, St. Louis.

RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS NEEDED EVERY- where. Experience unnecessary. Particulars free. Write Modern Civil Service Inst., Dept. 44, Denver, Colo.

LEARN ACCOUNTING OR RATE CON- struction at home. Big pay. Steady employment. Particulars free. Federal Railway Institute, Milwaukee, Wis.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, $200-$250 MONTH- ly, all railroads, everywhere; experience unnecessary. Railway Association, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR- tunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WOMEN TO SEW. GOODS SENT PRE- paid to your door; plain sewing; steady work; no canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 54, Philadelphia, Pa.

WANTED WOMEN. BECOME EXPERT dress designers. $125 month. Sample lessons free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. W 854, Rochester, N. Y.

MALE AND FEMALE HELP WANTED

GOV'T. POSITIONS ARE DESIRABLE. $1,100 to $1,300 to start. Let our expert (Former Government Examiner) prepare you. Free Booklet B. Patterson Civil Service School, Rochester, N. Y.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

STORIES WANTED—SEND MANUSCRIPT or write for particulars. Myers Writers' Service Bureau, 725 Montrose St., Vineland, N. J.

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS WANTED—CASH OR ROY- alty for ideas. Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 44, St. Louis, Mo.

TRICKS—GAMES

MAGIC GOODS, CARDS, GAMES, BOOKS, tricks. Catalogue free. National Supply Co., Box 116, Edina, Mo.

250 MAGIC TRICKS AND BIG CATALOG. Tricks, jokes, books, pictures, etc., 10c. United Sales Co., Springfield, Ill.

MAGIC GOODS, BOOKS, CARDS, LODE- stone, tricks. Catalog free. B. L. Smith Co., Newark, Mo.

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

IF YOU HAVE $50 OR $100, INVEST IT where you may get back several thousand. Write Conroe Oil Company, 808 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

UNDERGROUND TREASURES

UNDERGROUND TREASURES—HOW AND where to find them; particulars for 2c. Model Co., Morton Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

MEDICAL

TO SUFFERING MEN AND WOMEN. If you have lame back, failing memory, loss of ambition, despondency, unfitting you for the ordinary duties of life; or if afflicted with any chronic nervous, kidney or bladder disease. Remember; we are specialists in these diseases. Write; book symptom blank and advice free. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

I WILL GLADLY TELL ANYONE SUFFER- ing with rheumatism how I was cured in four days after two years' terrible suffering. Send name and address. M Box 143, Little Rock, Ark.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU READ The Texas Inventor, weekly magazine. Gives concise, reliable, up-to-date information and facts about most wonderful developments and fortune-making in history of Texas oil, and explains one particular opportunity in which investors should reap tremendous returns; published by practical oil operator, and tells how and where to invest for greatest safety and quick results. Write for free trial subscription. C. C. Cannan, Publisher, 739 Scanlan Bldg., Houston, Texas.

A 16 PAGE BOOK FREE. AN INTEREST-ing and instructive 16 page book, entitled, "Fortunes in Oil—How They Can and Cannot Be Made," will be sent free, without obligation on your part, if you tear out this ad now and mail with your name and address. It may both make and save you many dollars. Contains no advertising. Write for it now. Charles H. Saunders, 1303 Denham Bldg., Denver, Colo.

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU RE- ceive our literature. We have a sure thing and a possibility. You are certain to get back two hundred per cent and you may get back five thousand per cent. We have production and are paying dividends now. Write at once. Conroe Oil Company, 809 Union National Bank, Houston, Texas.

TEN CENTS A DAY GETS WARRANTY deed to land in Texas. Actual land, not lease or stock. Also share in cooperative well. Biggest bargain in Texas today. Lots going fast. Wonderful opportunity for big monthly income. Free maps and particulars. Bank references furnished on request. Sourlake Texas Oil Co., 308 DeMenil, St. Louis, Mo.

MILLION DOLLARS MADE OVER NIGHT in oil acreage. Small spot has done it. Few acres left, well located between four good producing oil fields. $200 acre. Ten per cent down, balance monthly. One acre may complete your independence for life. Free information. Bank reference. Address Texas Oil Acre Co., 812a Kentucky St., Dallas, Texas.

ONLY KNOWN MAP SHOWING ALL proven Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Louisiana oil fields, and other valuable information free. Don't invest before seeing it. R. V. Wilson, Mngr. Texas Traffic Ass'n, 10 Hoffman Bldg., Houston, Texas.

$2.00 MONTHLY BUYS DEED TO LAND and interest in oil wells that should pay $100 for each $2.00 invested. Write for particulars. Texas Gulf Company, 633 First Nat'l Bank, Houston, Texas.

SEND TEN CENTS (STAMPS) AND GET latest issue "Oil Ledger," giving all data on Texas oil fields. Statistical Department, 807 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

AS SAFE AS A BANK. 300% ANNUALLY. If you can invest fifteen dollars upwards, write, Midwest Investment Bureau, Boston Block, Minneapolis, Minn.

THOUSANDS MADE IN OIL. IF YOU HAVE $50.00 to $100.00 to invest, write me. L. J. Carroll, 806 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

A 10 ACRE LEASE FOR YOU, NEWEST Texas oil field. Full details, maps free. Ask for folder "B," Texoland Syndicate, Laughlin Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

LARGE PROFITS DAILY MADE IN THIS business. Openings everywhere. Small capital starts you. Complete outfits sold on installments. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Company, Morton Building, Chicago.

SONG POEMS WANTED

WRITE A SONG—LOVE, MOTHER, HOME, childhood, patriotic or any subject. I compose music and guarantee publication. Send words today. Thomas Merlin, 219 Reaper Block, Chicago.

HAVE YOU SONG POEMS? I HAVE BEST proposition. Ray Hibbeler, D45, 4040 Dickens Ave., Chicago.

MEN

GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED CHEWING TO- bacco, 50c lb., postpaid. Aden Francis, Dresden, Tenn.

BOYS AND GIRLS

EARN VALUABLE PREMIUMS IN SPARE time. Write Connolly Sales Company, Columbia Building, Sta. C., Phila., Pa.

BOOKS

EVERY AMBITIOUS MAN, WOMAN (BOY & girl) should visit the Nation's capitol. If this is impossible, you can secure full information in the Official Guide concerning the White House, Capitol, Congress, Government Departments, Congressional Library, Art Galleries, Museums, famous paintings and statuary, etc., containing 200 photographs; together with Washington the Beautiful, with 50 handsome, full-page engravings, 6x8 inches. Only $1.50 for both, or 85 cents each, postage prepaid. Address Joseph M. Day, Manager, Room 402 No. 1415 G St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

MISCELLANEOUS

FREE—CALIFORNIA VIEWS. WRITE TO- day. C. Berg Mfg. Co., Los Angeles, Cal.

PATENTS

PATENTS—SEND FOR FREE BOOK. Contains valuable information for inventors. Send sketch of your invention for free opinion of its patentable nature. Prompt service. (Twenty years experience.) Talbert & Talbert, 4276 Talbert Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PERSONAL

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